

Back to God Hour broadcast re-enters Mexico City

In response to a communication from the radio and television commission, radio stations in Mexico began dropping all religious broadcasts in September. The official explanation noted that "some religious programming" should not be aired. Among the programs cancelled by the stations was The Back to God Hour Spanish broadcast *La Antorcha Espiritual*, the first religious broadcast to air in Mexico in 1966 following decades of governmental restrictions.

Upon receipt of the letters notifying Rev. Juan Boonstra of this development, the Spanish department sprang into action. Stations who had contracted to air the programs were called directly. Following weeks of explanations and attention, the Spanish department had succeeded in placing the broadcast on all the stations previously contracted except one. The remaining city was Mexico City.

The stations were standing firm. Efforts from Chicago proved futile. And with every passing day, it appeared more certain that residents of Mexico's largest city would not hear the Gospel on their local stations.

In a final dramatic effort to once again broadcast in this important market, Rev. Boonstra determined to travel there and meet personally with

the broadcast community. "We will make every effort to recapture an outlet in Mexico City," he said. "A nation's capital city with a population of 11 million people must be reached by radio. Our denomination is deeply committed to this mission field. We must not allow any doors to remain closed. We go in faith."

In faith, they went. On Monday, October 31, Rev. Boonstra, accompanied by Don Triezenberg, flew to Mexico City determined to spend the necessary time and effort to negotiate the release of the Spanish broadcast.

The initial contacts proved inconclusive. Rumors concerning the real reason for the commission's action were rampant. Factual reports were non-existent. No one seemed to know precisely why the broadcast could not be aired. Patience was the most often repeated advice. Rev. Boonstra was advised "to wait six months; it will all blow over."

But on Thursday morning, November 3, three days after arriving, negotiations with Radio Red proved successful. The broadcast would be aired Sunday, November 6, and every Sunday following.

In addition to successfully placing the broadcast back in Mexico City, Rev. Boonstra received proposals from



Troubleshooting in Mexico City, Rev. Juan Boonstra [right] discusses government restrictions on religious radio broadcasting with a local businessman.

stations throughout Mexico to broadcast Reflexion-TV and the Reflexion radio broadcast.

Upon his return to Chicago, Rev. Boonstra commented: "Since all our efforts from Chicago were proving futile, we felt this was an imperative

action. We simply had to place our broadcast in Mexico City. It has been a difficult two months, but once again God has opened the doors for broadcast missions. It is our fervent hope and prayer that He will use the broadcasts in Mexico for His purpose."

Good news from Quebec - a Christian school

by Henk Van Andel

Mr. Van Andel resides in Dollard des Ormeaux, Quebec

With all the disquieting events taking place in Quebec in recent times, you may well be pleasantly surprised by 'good news'. While it appears that the difficulties that Canadians are experiencing in terms of their dual cultural heritage will be with us for some time to come, it is good to be able to report on a very encouraging development which transcends cultural differences - the recent establishment in Quebec of its first and only evangelically oriented Christian high school.

The story of the 'birth' of Emmanuel High School in the Montreal area is worth being told, because it shows once again how God can accomplish great things from very small beginnings. About six years ago, after having heard a series of broadcasts on Christian education by Dr. Joel Nederhood of the Back to God Hour, a local Baptist school teacher decided that what we really needed in the Montreal area was a Christian high school.

It was a fine idea, to be sure, but surely no more than a dream! There were no evangelical elementary schools in Montreal. The evangelical community was small, and relatively dispersed over this huge, largely Roman Catholic, secularized city. Christian education was limited to the churches, and not many shared this teacher's dream of a full time christian

school. Yet, he found a number of like-minded men - another school teacher, a local pastor, and two business men. Together, they met for many evenings, discussing their dream.

What kind of a school should this be? It was clear that it could not be denominationally oriented, given the fact that four different denominations were represented in this small group. Slowly but surely they built up the ground rules for this school of their dreams, and in doing so they had to discover the Biblical directives for the education of young people.

Being guided by some documents written by others who had previously struggled with these questions, they drafted an educational statement of faith, that each of them, although firmly rooted in his own different church tradition, could subscribe to. It is a strong statement, very Biblical in its contents, spelling out a Christian philosophy of education. Ever since then, this statement has served to identify the aims of the school, and it has been of tremendous significance in uniting people from many denominational backgrounds to work together in this effort of christian education.

But a statement of faith does not make a school, and the task of transforming their dream to reality seemed almost insurmountable to this small, self-appointed committee. A public meeting was called in a downtown church, but the large building dwarfed the thirty or so people who came to hear what this was all about. Also, many practical and legal obsta-

cles were in the way. The government in Quebec has many regulations pertaining to private schools, and upon reading them, it appeared that before a permit would be given, the school needed so many approved facilities, fully qualified teachers, fully developed programs and financial securities, that it seemed almost impossible to even make a start.

But the Lord proved that He provides. An existing school building was found, in which classroom space could be rented. Slowly but surely, mostly by way of person to person contact, the idea of a christian school spread in evangelical circles, as more and more people showed their interest. The provincial authorities proved to be most cooperative in the preparation of all the legal requirements. Finally, in the spring of 1975 an official permit was requested from Quebec, a principal and two teachers were hired, and word went out that the school would open its doors in September, offering grade seven and eight. All that was needed were some students.

Although the faith of the school's newly formed board was tested during that summer as one by one parents enrolled their children, it was with gratitude to the Lord that the school was officially opened in September 1975, with 38 students. The opening address was given by Dr. Joel Nederhood, who in a very real way had inspired the creation of this school, which now bears the name 'Emmanuel High School'. Since then, there has been steady growth, and this year grades seven to ten are offered, with

an enrollment of 92 students, and with 12 full- and part-time teachers.

Even though there are many Christian high schools across Canada, Emmanuel High School is probably somewhat unique in several respects. The fact that it is truly denominational is shown in that at least ten denominations are represented in the student body, with the largest groups from any single denomination representing less than 25 per cent of the total. Also the teachers are of greatly varying background.

While it continues to be a struggle to make ends meet financially, especially now in these troubled times for our province of Quebec, we are confident that with God's help, this school can grow and continue to be a strong witness to Christian education in the Montreal area. If nothing else, in its short history, it has already been a blessing to many who have been associated with it.

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NEXT WEEK

Alternative to energy

VIEWPOINT

"I am not eloquent"

There are two kinds of people in the church: the Moses' and the Aarons. I know a "Moses" quite well. A solid Christian, a good Reformed man. He is not a great orator on the pulpit but whenever I listen to him I get my fill of spiritual meat.

Moses had that handicap. He had learnt many wholesome lessons during his long stay in Midian but he had one more to learn when he confronted the Lord in Exodus 4. Moses was told to bring the Word to God's people but he tells his Lord: "But I am not eloquent; never have been and never will. I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue."

He couldn't speak well but he sure knew his Lord. And the Lord told him to go "and I will be with you and teach you what to say."

I know a number of "Aarons" too. Great orators, well liked, public figures, but spiritually shallow. Moses saw the visible side of Aaron. He must have heard and seen him at work, perhaps with the voice of Joel Nederhood and the charisma of Billy Graham. Moses must have envied him. But what Aaron said was shallow, meaningless.

As you know, Aaron was to become Moses' mouthpiece. Even though the Lord told Moses that He was going to be with him, Moses had his doubts. Then Moses was told to teach and instruct Aaron who would in turn bring the Lord's message to His people. God told Moses: "Aaron shall be your mouthpiece and you shall be to him as God."

It was an alliance that was to bring much frustration and pain to Moses in the future.

We have the Moses' and Aarons with us today and we tend to be drawn to the latter. A great speaker will draw throngs but a "Moses" who humbly and non-oratorically brings God's Word will have a smaller but regular audience.

Look within our churches. The great speakers are sought after by churchgoers. Not all orators, of course, are poor theologically just as not all solidly Reformed preachers are poor speakers.

Moses had virtually constant contact with the Lord. They were always talking together, discussing. Moses had an infallible, inerrant teacher, the Lord, yet he had a difficult time believing his Teacher.

When told to go out with God's message, he said: "But, but, I am not eloquent." This is what we all say when it comes to door-knocking evangelism for instance or reading a sermon on the pulpit: "I'm not a good speaker. It's not for me."

We tend to think more of the words that come out than of the message; more of our eloquence or slowness of speech than of God's Word.

It must have been somewhat frustrating for our Lord in dealing with Moses, and with us too. The Lord's first reaction to Moses' statement about not being eloquent was: "Who made man's mouth or who makes the mute, or deaf, or the seeing or the blind? Have not I? Now therefore go..."

Moses' Teacher and Lord said, in effect: "You worry too much, Moses. You don't need the gift of eloquence to be able to bring My message. I will be with you and teach you what to say."

We must look to the Message, not to the orator. That applies to our Sunday worship as we listen to the Word of God. That also applies to our tasks as "doers of the Word" in our day to day evangelism at work or within the neighborhood. Most of us are not eloquent speakers but all of us have access to the Bible and have the promise of our Lord that he will be with us "and teach us what to say."

Keith Knight

by Keith Knight

NEWSVIEWS

Last minute wills allowed

A Saskatchewan farmer, trapped under his tractor and near death, once scrawled a roughly handwritten will in mud. "All to my wife", he wrote, and signed his name before he died.

Under Saskatchewan law, the will was recognized in the courts and, effective March 31, 1978, similar wills — known as holograph wills — will also become legal in Ontario.

A section legalizing holograph wills is contained in legislation which received royal assent earlier in November but it may only be used in special circumstances.

It is still best for every adult person to have a formal will drawn up by a lawyer. The cost is not high and in terms of eliminating bureaucratic red tape and other problems for heirs, it is extremely important.

If you do ever have to make a holograph will, however, the new legislation states that it does not need a witness but must be entirely in your own handwriting and followed by your signature.

A printed form from a stationary shop signed without a witness or any other lettered form does not constitute a holograph will. The section on wills is part of the legislation entitled an Act to Reform the Law Respecting Succession to the Estates of Deceased Persons, and also included a clause equalizing the treatment of children born both within or outside marriage in estate matters.

These last-minute, informal wills might come in handy in special circumstances but even those last-minute efforts can be avoided by getting together with a lawyer to draw

up a proper will.

It is important that each husband and wife have one for the protection of each other in the event of death as well as for the protection of your children. Once the wills have been formulated, the practical, earthly aspects of death are gone and need not worry you again.

It would be good, however, to review your wills every ten years or so and have it updated as changes within your life situation occur, such as after the death of a spouse or once all the children are married.

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Growth in the Lord

by Dr. Jack Fennema

Christian Schools: Whose responsibility?

According to Ephesians 6:4, parents, with fathers taking the lead, are to nurture their children in the Lord. That means that all of the instruction and all of the correction provided for children from birth to adulthood is to be in the Lord. That leaves no room for secular instruction or secular correction. Scripture is quite clear on that point. Parents, then, have the primary responsibility for the nurture of their children, and they are to see to it that this is done "in the Lord."

But parents do not stand alone in this task and responsibility. The instruction and correction of children does not take place solely within the home. From a young age on, children are to participate in the task and activities of a visible, organized church. This church, too, provides a portion of the instruction (indoctrination?) and correction (discipline?) for the child. And the third key institution providing nurture for children, the school, also assists by being responsible for the more formal, sequential portion of the nurturing process. Since the child spends such a large amount of time under the guidance of the day school (up to one-half of his waking hours), the influence of this organization is not to be underestimated.

But even though the church and the school are the two major institutions which share the nurturing process with the home, the task of determining the nature of the nurture and seeing to it that it is properly provided remains with the parents. The nurture must be "in the Lord." That means selecting a Bible-believing, orthodox church, one which takes its nurturing responsibilities seriously. That also means selecting a God-honouring, Christ-centred school. And it is the parent's responsibility to select the church and school which he believes will most adequately provide his child with the nurture that Scripture tells him to provide — nurture that is in the Lord.

Ecclesiastes 4:12 offers a picture or model worthy to note. It states that a man fighting alone will probably be defeated; that one fighting back-to-back with another will be able to conquer; but that three men forming a defensive triangle is even better. "For a three-fold (or triple-braided) cord is not easily broken." That verse seems to summarize it well. The task of nurturing children in the Lord is one given by God to parents, and it is primarily their responsibility to see to it that this is provided. But when the church and the school can add their support and strength by "walking along the same pathway" as the home, the cord of unity is certainly strengthened in a most comforting manner.

Unfortunately, that three-fold cord, that tripod seems to be weakening, at least with certain segments of the reformed community. And when one strand of the cord or one leg of this tripod is missing, the nurturing process is weakened considerably.

A greater number of parents seem to be viewing the Christian school as an option rather than as a mandate, as a luxury rather than as a necessity. More will be said about that trend in following articles. But the organized churches, too, often do not appear to be as supportive of the Christian school as they once were. The Church Order of the Christian Reformed denomination states that "the consistory shall diligently encourage the members of the congregation to establish and maintain good Christian schools, and shall urge parents to have their children instructed in these schools according to the demands of the Covenant" (Article 71). That statement seems to summarize quite well the responsibilities of the organized church towards the Christian school. But how well are the churches carrying out that mandate?

The next article in two weeks will attempt to outline and describe the responsibilities which churches have towards their local Christian School.

Education and discipline

Dear Sir:

I am writing in response to Mr. Haverkamp's letter regarding discipline in the church. (Nov. 11, 1977) I, too, am concerned about discipline in the Christian Reformed Church, no doubt along with many others. But I see another side to the concern Mr. Haverkamp raises.

In the first place, I object to Mr. Haverkamp's Dutch quotation. He writes, "Could it be according to the Dutch saying: 'De geleerdheid brengt hen tot razernij?'" Over against this one might make a similarly doubtful point by quoting Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Of course education has its perils, so does lack of education. I object to the Dutch quotation because it may lead to (or indicate?) a distrust of education and educated people. This in turn may be accompanied by a seldom identified form of rebellion: unteachability. Elders, of course, have authority to rule within the church. But God also gives the church "Pastors and teachers for the equip-

ment of the saints." (Ephesians 4:11) Do we really believe in an educated clergy? Then that belief needs to be put into practice, doesn't it, by being willing to learn? So also in cases of discipline, I hope consistories and congregations will be open to guidance from those trained in our seminaries as to how to apply it.

Furthermore, Mr. Haverkamp's letter leaves the impression (which may not be accurate, of course) that the broader wisdom of classis and synod was not always well received in Clinton. I would like to point out that classes and Synod are composed of only fifty percent clergy. It seems that the elder delegates to these assemblies, "untainted" by seminary education, were not in agreement with Clinton consistory's action either. So it is hardly fair to attack the "geleerdheid" for what Mr. Haverkamp sees as the failings of these assemblies. Let's be careful not to blame "higher" education when in fact we are rejecting the broader counsel of the church.

Of course, mistakes will be made. They will be made by the pastors who teach. They will also be made by the elders who are especially charged with the ruling of the church. As the Heidelberg Catechism teaches us in Lord's Day 39, let's be patient with the failings of those in authority, whatever the form. Let us be both teachable and governable, for "the wisdom that is from above... is open to reason." (James 3:17)

Rev. J. Veltman
Renfrew, Ont.

I believe;
help
my
unbelief

Wilma Jonkheer

Lord, I am often
like a doubting Israelite
very much in need of
food and water,
yet failing to see
that Your provisions
are always close at hand.

But I who have seen
Your greatest Provision of all,
should I not already believe
even *before* clouds of manna
fill the sky
and cool water flows
from hot, desert rock?

World missions update

Dear Sir:

Thank you for your insertion of the short article I wrote about our experience in Mexico last Christmas. Due to this article I was able to send to the pastor of this congregation the sum of \$50. This may not sound like much for us, but it certainly meant a lot to him.

I will send another \$25, which will reach there around Christmas time, and am sure

that this will be equally welcome. We wonder sometimes how our Lord works with these gifts, and with our pre-conditioned minds we find it hard to understand that there are people who have to live by faith.

Of course, we so often use this word too, but does it really mean the same if we look at ourselves and find that we are always preparing for the future, the way we want

this to be? But it is then that we find out that God's ways are not necessarily our ways.

From this page as well, a hearty thank you in our Saviour's name to all who responded to the challenge given and may He richly reward you. We have so much and it is a great privilege that we can share in some specific need.

Piet Steen
Hinton, Alta.

"Please, Lord: let my daddy get killed"

Dear Sir:

That is an awful prayer, isn't it? I hope you have never prayed that prayer. Perhaps you think that this prayer has been made up. A good gimmick to catch attention. Well it is not. This is truly a prayer which was said by a little boy in dead earnest.

Why do I write this? For one reason only. The reason is that I am deeply concerned with some attitudes members of the C.R.C. have and which our young people are developing further to very dangerous levels.

Why did this little boy pray this prayer? His father was an alcoholic. He would come home and abuse his wife, be a terror to his children, repent with tears the next day, and do it all over again the next weekend. I wonder how many little boys and girls have prayed this prayer. How many children have said of their dad, "I wish he would be dead."

Do you feel the hurt behind these prayers? This boy wasn't just angry with his dad. No, he was scared. When his mother heard him pray this she started to cry and said, "But you cannot pray this." "Yes, mom, I know, but I am so scared."

Perhaps I feel this hurt a little more because of what happened not so long ago. It is now 5½ years ago that my brother Jacob suddenly passed away. My wife and I went to Holland to attend the funeral and to be of help and

support. That was a sad homecoming. My brother was married and had two children. A girl nine years old, and a little boy of about a year old.

I remember so well sitting beside this little boy's playpen. He was too young to understand, did not know what was going on, but he missed his daddy who would always play with him after coming home from work.

He looked me over, starting at my feet. Then slowly his big blue eyes raised higher until finally he looked at my face. Then his face brightened and he smiled, put out his hands to me and said: "Pappa." He had never seen me before and now, because there was quite a resemblance, he thought:

"Pappa is back again, everything is all right."

I'll never forget this and then I think of that little boy who prayed: "Please Lord let my Daddy get killed." Oh, the hurt of alcoholism.

Three years ago my brother Hugh passed away suddenly. He was the father of a ten-year-old boy and a fourteen-year-old girl. The girl, being more mature, took the loss more quietly, but grieved deeply. Yet my nephew, when he realized that this was forever, that he didn't have a dad anymore, revolted bitterly.

He clenched his fists and stamped his feet and screamed to heaven: "Oh, God this is not fair. I need my daddy."

And then I think of boys all over this country who say of

their father: "I wish he were dead." Oh, the curse of alcoholism.

I see people at parties, members of our denomination drinking, sometimes sneaking out to the kitchen and taking a few extra. Oh, people do you know what you are doing? Oh, you are not a alcoholic, you can leave it alone! Well why don't you? Why don't you at least stop after the second drink? You need to loosen up you say, otherwise you can have no fun?

Do you know, that when you say that, you could already be an alcoholic? Oh you're not. Are you sure? Nobody plans to become an alcoholic, you know. It's just like getting ill, it needs no planning. I hear of young people drinking. Taking

their liquor to their young people's parties. I don't want to believe this, but I have too.

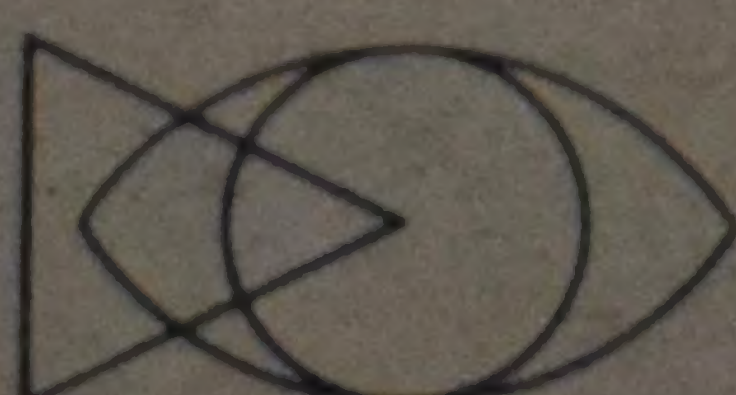
Do you know the dangers of alcohol? It may seem fun when you have the liquor, but what when the liquor has you? It happens, you know, mostly to people who were sure that it would never happen to them. When you get married and the Lord in His goodness grants you children, would you like to hear your little boy or girl pray: "Please, Lord, let my Daddy get killed?"

"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15-16

Andy Verboom
Stewiacke, N.S.

NATURE & MIRACLE

By Harry Diemer



Wedge Publishing Foundation, Toronto
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In his book "Nature and Miracles" Diemer reveals to readers that miracles are a part of the natural laws. ...not all natural laws are presently known; many secret powers are still hidden away in nature; powers whose working we merely glimpse from time to time. In earlier centuries many events were considered supernatural that to us are so natural that we scarcely give them a thought. Furthermore, as the knowledge of natural law increases, many phenomena will lose their miraculous character. He also goes on to say that the miracles of Jesus are neither supernatural nor against nature. "They do not go against nature but against the sinful state of nature which has become so by demonic powers, sickness, and such. Going against the sinful state of nature these miracles actually restore the original state of nature."

Church Page

Pastoral Pondering

Another look at Sunday worship

For the basis of a discussion of summer worship at the council meeting, I asked Mr. J. DenBoer to write a few lines on this subject. What he wrote speaks to us all. With thanks to him, it follows below. Let us all prayerfully consider this matter and rather than point the finger elsewhere, examine ourselves before the Lord.

F. Bakker

Imagine our congregation living today in a way comparable to the early church as described in the New Testament, especially in Acts.

Cars would come into the church-yards in the same way, but there would be more talking and greetings in the Lord. Gradually people would sit down; the latest prayer requests for sick or burdened people would be passed on to the minister and the morning service would proceed not too much different from the way we have it today.

But the real difference would show up right after the service. No rush to the doors, except to get a breath of fresh air. But then back in again and sitting, standing and talking in all the rooms (just like last fall during the bazaar); talking about what the sermon from the Word of God that morning

meant to them personally, how it strengthened them to face the coming week again. Then in between, groups would sit down and unpack their lunch, sharing with the people who hadn't brought any or with visitors. This would go on till 3 or 4 o'clock when the second service and sermon and prayer would start again. After that gradually people would go to their cars to go home again, much strengthened by the Word of God, fellowship and prayer.

Yes, the early church not only confessed, but also lived the communion of the saints.

We had a little taste of it 25-30 years ago when the need drove us together to closer fellowship. God has blessed us tremendously since that time in our churches, schools, houses, cars, trips, vacations, cottages. But have we not lost

too much fellowship? Isn't especially the summertime in this beautiful country a time of poor fellowship as people go on vacation or to the cottages? No, let's not cast stones at the "cottage-people" or "vacationers". They may be more faithful in attending church than we who stay home.

Yet, as a congregation we fall short of the ideal as Paul portrays it in I Cor. 12: 12-27 where he compares the church with a human body with feet, hands, ears, eyes, nice parts, feeble parts, important and less important parts. But all those parts (members working together, sharing together, suffering together. The best time to make the members work, share and suffer together is still on Sunday. That makes for growth and movement of the body; the body of Christ, the congregation.

During the week and especially on Sunday, let's more and more imitate the early church and grow in the Lord and as His body in fellowship.

J. DenBoer
Hebron, Whitby

Church News

CHRISTIAN REFORMED

Declined

-to Second Church in Toronto, the Rev. Stuart C. Pastine of Lynnwood, Washington.

New Clerk

-for the Maranatha Church of Woodstock, Ont. Mr. R. Vanderploeg, 1045 Parkinson Rd., Woodstock, Ont. N4S 7W3.

New church

A new congregation was organized in Abbotsford, B.C. on Oct. 31 of this year. It is the Trinity Christian Reformed Church of Abbotsford. Its temporary meeting place is the Mennonite Educational Institute, Clearbrook Rd., Clearbrook, B.C. Chairman of the consistory is John Dykstra of 1690

Jackson St., Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 2A3 (tel. 604-853-5354). The new clerk is Henry Jansen of 32383 Downes Rd., R.R. #1, Matsqui, B.C. V0X 1S0. And the treasurer is Harry Vaandrager, 1880 Jackson St., Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 2Z9.

Christian Stewardship Services

CSS representative Harry Houtman plans to be in the London, St. Thomas, Strathroy and Sarnia areas during the week of December 12-16. If anyone would like to speak to him about making a will, or some other part of estate planning, please contact him at Christian Stewardship Services, 455 Spadina Ave., Toronto, Ont. or call him evenings at 416-461-1207. U kunt ook in het Hollands bellen of schrijven.



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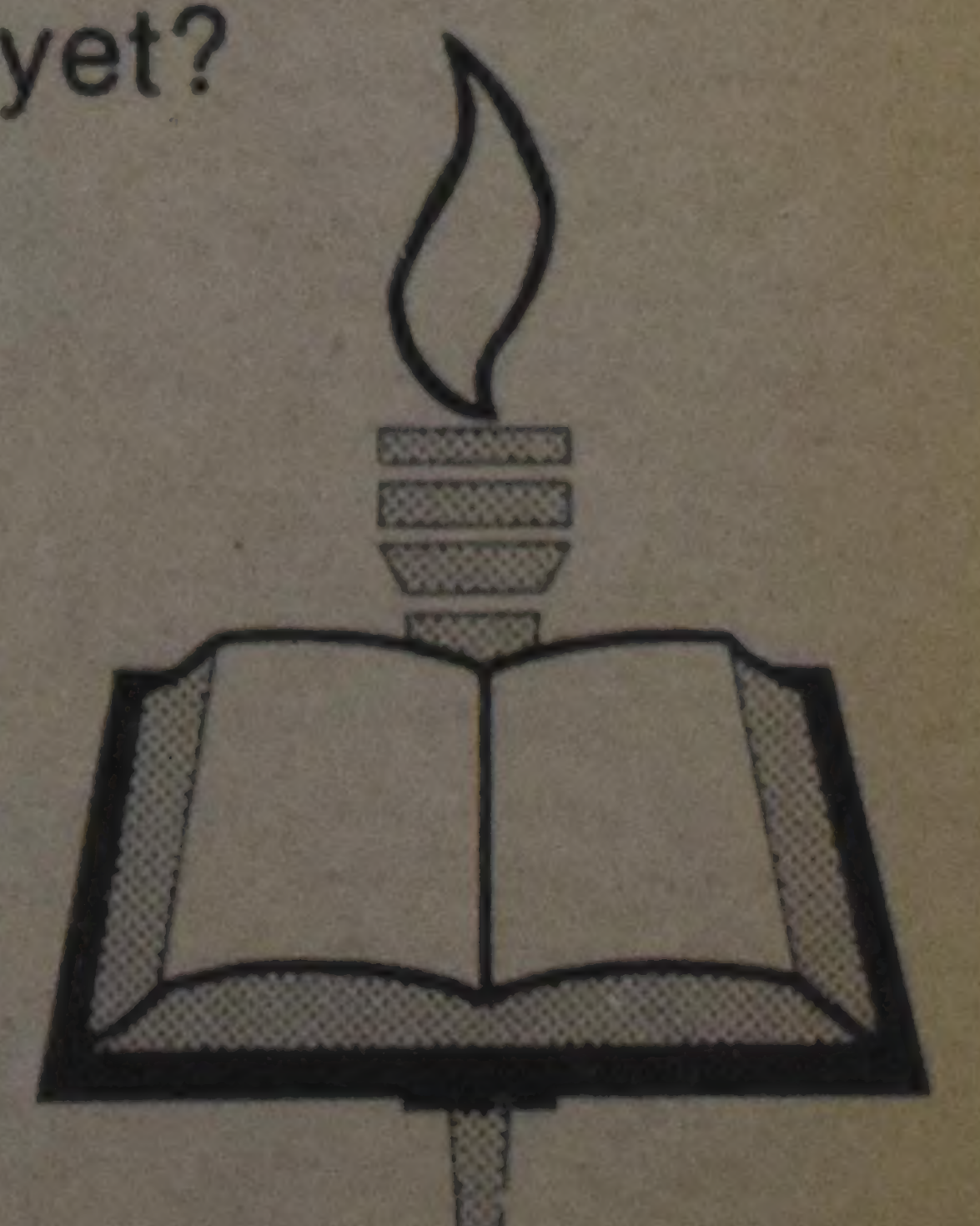
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Understanding Schaeffer: The thoughts of an evangelist

by Nicolas Terpstra

Francis A. Schaeffer has become hot property. For many years little known, he is fast becoming an evangelical household name, with rising book sales and increasing familiarity with his line of thought riding in the wake. This is due primarily to the release of the film series (and accompanying book) *How Should We Then Live?* at once a Christian overview and evaluation of 2000 years of declining Western culture and a summary of Schaeffer's thought.

With many church and parachurch groups renting the series, now booked far in advance, popular exposure to his work is rapidly growing. Such popularity in a Christian work should be seen as heartening, however not without reservation for with all the mass exposure have also come misconceptions of the man, his work, and the community in which the latter was developed.

These misconceptions have been many and varied. Schaeffer is seen by some as a great philosopher, the man who will lead us into intellectual battle with the humanists. Others see him as academically weak, an unoriginal thinker given to sweeping generalizations and outdated black and white solutions. He has been accused of rationalism and superficiality, praised for insight and intelligence. In many cases these criticisms have been valid but overstated; they fail to appreciate the task which Schaeffer sees for himself and the L'Abri community in both the Christian and the broader world.

What follows is not intended as a thoroughgoing critique of Schaeffer's thought. Indeed it will touch on few of the points made by either Schaeffer or his critics. Rather it will seek to aid in the understanding and appreciation of Schaeffer's system of thought by placing it in the context of the L'Abri community and seeing it within the limitations Schaeffer himself put on it and on the broader subject of his role within the Christian community.

The community of L'Abri began in 1955 when Schaeffer decided to quit his association with a missionary board and begin a faith mission, open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Shortly after obtaining a chalet in a small Swiss farming village the Schaeffers began receiving visitors, mostly students and other young people who had heard that here was a place where intelligent discussion on important questions was taking place. Practically all were non-Christians, many were existentialists, and the policy adopted was that honest questions deserved honest answers.

The nature of the community as a faith mission open to God's leading prevents any hard and fast definition of L'Abri as anything other than a body of Christians who try to help the people who come to them. As the needs of the visitors change, the work of the community follows suit. Thus, whereas the early years saw a large number of non-Christians passing through, more recent years have seen an increase in the number of Christians, some more in search of auto-

graphs than answers.

By and large these Christians are not as thoroughly caught up in the philosophical temper of the times as the early seekers were caught up in existentialism. As a result there is less of a continuing formulation of thought and more of a concentration on learning the system of thought which was developed in the early years.

Visitors now are more interested in gaining a philosophic grounding for their Christian beliefs, a sounder base.



The questions asked tend to be more academic and deal more with theological and ecclesiastical concerns, two examples being the current debate over the nature and reliability of the Bible and the role of women in the church.

However, while the particular character of the community and the work may change over the years, the nature of both as faith missions remains. The failure to realize this is what lies at the root of many misconceptions and criticisms of the work of both Schaeffer and L'Abri. For while philosophical problems are dealt with and theological concerns debated, the community is in no way a philosophical or theological school or study centre. Nor, for that matter, is it a commune. It is, by nature, a place where the proclamation of the gospel is carried out, it is a mission outreach. This holds equally for Schaeffer. He sees himself not as a systematic philosopher or apologete but as evangelist, bringing the gospel to people in language which they can understand.

What Schaeffer realized when setting upon his work in the mid-fifties was that it would no longer do simply to present the truth of the gospel without first preparing the ground. In a post-Christian world, with a radically changed intellectual frame, a critique and discussion of presuppositions had to be undertaken before the gospel

could be presented. Talk of Christian Truth means little to a person who believes there is no such thing as truth. Thus in discussions and lectures Schaeffer undertook this critique, challenging humanist presuppositions and offering instead the Christian ones, claiming that these better explain the reality of the world and man. Out of this was developed what is usually referred to as Schaeffer's Apologetic.

The term is misleading, as would be Schaeffer's Philosophy or Schaeffer's Theology. These terms connote a thorough consideration of the topic and a coherent systematic structure. While Schaeffer's work bears both these traits, it bears neither to the degree by which it could be properly labelled philosophy, theology or apologetics. Rather, as he himself says in his first book, *The God Who Is There*, it is pre-evangelism; posing questions, critiquing humanist thought and offering answers which prepare the individual for a consideration of the gospel.

His work is not an example of academic rigour because he is not an academic. He is first and foremost an evangelist, dedicated to the spread of the gospel and the saving of souls. While he addresses himself to a more educated audience, his purpose is that of any evangelist, not of a systematic philosopher or theologian, book cover jackets and promotional material notwithstanding.

It is in part this evangelistic purpose which causes Schaeffer to do and say things which gall academics and in many cases make them suspicious. A prime example is his cultural and philosophic critique. To the justified horror of many, Schaeffer breezes over Western intellectual history in a very superficial manner, dispensing of philosophers and theologians with a sentence here and a paragraph there. It is a practice which is hardly thorough and, in the eyes of many hardly fair.

Yet to be understood at all it must be realized that this is a very narrowly focused critique and not an attempt at any final Christian word on the broader subject. In this work Schaeffer is primarily interested in picking out the trends and presuppositions which have led western thought to the place it is at today, to discover in some loose way why the current cultural consensus is as it is.

To some this will undoubtedly appear as a feeble excuse for the lack of intellectual rigour or completeness yet it must also be realized that Schaeffer did not develop his thought in or for a body of scholars. In the non-academic atmosphere of L'Abri his primary concern was in getting through to young people who, while educated, were seldom erudite scholars of philosophy, history or theology. It is well possible that in going into these subjects more thoroughly he would have gone over the heads of many of those he was trying to reach, thus negating his original, primary purpose. This is not to say that he does not encourage further, deeper study. He does encourage it, at the same time realizing that it may not be part of his particular task within the Christian community.

As for the suspicions, these centre primarily around the charge of ration-

alism. Attempts have been made to trace this tendency back to Schaeffer's seminary days, when he studied under professors schooled in the old Princeton rationalism. While this may in part be true, it is incomplete, for it fails to take into account the later environment in which Schaeffer developed his thought. This environment was Europe in the late 1950's and early 1960's, an environment dominated by secular and religious existentialism. It was largely in response to existential thought, which downplayed rationality, that Schaeffer emphasized reason and the reasonableness of Christianity.

Far from seeking to put Christian faith and doctrine upon a cold, mechanistic, rationalistic base, he attempted to counterbalance current thought and arrive at a position closer to the truth, that of reason within the framework or bounds of revelation. His view then and now is that the humanist's faith in autonomous reason leads to despair — hence its rejection by the existentialists — while reason within the framework of revelation can lead to truth. Even so, contrary to rationalism, this knowledge of the truth can never be exhaustive. It is true to the creator and the creation, true as it were to the facts yet due to the finite nature of both revelation and man it cannot be exhaustive.

Schaeffer's reaction to existentialism points up another role which he sees for himself within the Christian community, that of a countervailing weight. Therefore, before evangelicals became much concerned with social justice he was emphasizing the compassionate use of wealth. Now, with an increasing number of evangelicals speaking out on social justice and advocating poverty, he emphasizes that there is also a biblical basis for the ownership of private property.

His ultimate concern in this regard is that there be a recognition of both sides of the issue and that Christians live and act in that recognition, without swinging over to unbiblical polarities in either direction. He seeks to set the balance, without letting it slip into mediocrity or middle of the road complacency.

The task of correcting misconceptions surrounding another person's system of thought is never easy, and I do not pretend to have fully explained the circumstances and background of Schaeffer's thought. Even so, all circumstances and background considered Schaeffer's ideas are by no means immune to criticism. Neither are Schaeffer's arguments wholly qualified by an account of their origins and evolution.

There are weak points in his system of thought and there is still much room for discussion and debate of his views on rationality, history, anthropology, epistemology and other areas. I only hope that this brief outline will help to set that discussion in perspective, as well as to serve to clear up common misconceptions and hopes as to what system of thought actually offers. What it offers is a base, a grounding. It does not provide, as some might hope, a complete refutation of humanist thought.

Continued on next page

Schaeffer

Continued from page 5

It is not a system of airtight, invincible arguments which can be brandished in the face of non-Christians and used to force them into the corner where, fully repentant they will recant their beliefs and embrace the gospel. Schaeffer offers a critique and sets a direction. It is for others to follow and further develop this critique and direction. He remains, by choice, the evangelist.

This responsibility for development rests with his associates and with all those who agree with his critique and direction. As it stands the work is incomplete; one might almost say that it does not open itself to detailed criticism because at present it lacks detail. Yet for all its incompleteness it holds promise and it is this promise which must be worked on by those who hold to the system, together with other scholars in the body of Christ.

The valid charge of superficiality must be answered with a more detailed historical critique, that of rationalism with a more complete, balanced presentation of the respective roles of revelation and reason. Other criticisms to the system must be met by a more thorough elucidation of the problems and issues under investigation.

Schaeffer's work has been a boon to many Christians, making them realize that they need not hide in the corner or mumble excuses when confronted with intellectual criticism. It has brought to many, young and old alike the awareness that Christianity is not just a matter of piety but that it is a truth which covers all of life, the intellectual side as well.

And while it may not be academically precise this is in a certain way good, for it has put the work within the grasp of those who are not well acquainted with formal philosophy. But further work is needed to turn this pre-evangelistic system into a more complete apologetic. Only through this will Schaeffer's hope in the refutation of humanist thought and the advancement of Christian truth be more fully realized.

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CRWRC In Haiti

by Rev. Ralph Heynen

PASTORAL COUNSELLING

I don't know how a marriage counselor ever got the name of Mary Freely. Whether that's her real name or whether that's a name she assumes when she writes about marriage, she writes some very pithy articles about marriage. One of them was entitled, "Money Problems".

She writes somewhat as follows, "Who should handle the money in your family, the wife or the husband? The good answer that can be given is that it all depends on who the husband or wife is. An English wife said, 'If my husband came to me and gave me his pay envelope unopened. I would think he was a mouse and not a man.' But I know many men who give their pay checks to their wives and there isn't a mouse among them. The men I'm thinking of have bigger things on their minds than checking over the super-market list or checking over exactly what their wife spends. I believe that a man should be the head of the family, but this does not mean that he handles the family budget. From my mail I get a very stormy view of Mr. & Mrs. American battling about money. My experience tells me that the family income should be in the hands of the one who has the most talents, the most time, and the most concern about the budget. It would be a dream if every couple would begin their marriage with this philosophy, for marriage should encompass more than dollars and cents."

I rather like that statement because money is a very powerful thing in our world. If you have a great deal of money you can do many things. If you have very little you must do without many things. Because it is so powerful, particularly in our age, it often becomes a problem. People lie, cheat, and they steal. People use money to hurt others and to get their own way. Some people worship money like a god.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Practice times of solitude and then when the great experience of life comes we will never be lonely, for even in the valley of the shadows we will feel His living presence with us.

Money gives us power, it gives security. If you've ever spent your last dollar or you've overdrawn your checking account and still have some bills to pay, you know the feeling of deep insecurity that such situations bring. We need money to feel secure in our world because everything rolls along on dollars and cents.

The power of money is a tremendous force in the lives of all of us. It's a tremendous force in the nation as you can well see when they discuss the national budget. It's quite an issue within the church when the budget is discussed. We want money because it helps us to feel secure; it gives us the power to get many things. Because money is so powerful, it's important that we use it wisely. If money and its power are used unwisely, they destroy relationships, and they cause families to crumble. It's probably for that reason that so many couples have to seek marriage counselors when they would possibly be better off to consult with somebody about their budget or about finances. So many problems in the family grow out of this matter of money.

So they ask, "Who ought to be the family treasurer; who should handle the funds?" Many people maintain that because a husband is the

Money and the Family

head of the house, he should also be the one who controls the checkbook. I rather question that and I agree with this writer, Mary Freely, that it depends upon who the person is and how well they can handle money. It is important for parents, when children are young, to teach them the value of money. I don't think you do that by means of lecturing about money or about using statements like, "Do you think money grows on trees, or how in the world can you spend all that money!" The idea is that we should teach them how money ought to be used, the value of it in our lives, the importance of it, but also the thought that it has to be used wisely.

If a couple can decide who is going to be the treasurer there are a few guidelines that we ought to follow. There are certain ways of preventing difficulties which money might cause in marriage. There is a problem that arises when the proper person is acting as treasurer that he or she uses money or the control of money as a weapon. In some families a wife must ask her husband for every \$5 or \$10 that she needs to spend.

To people who are rather poor or who are just getting by, this is something that you can understand. But I know of people in second marriages where a wife must give account of everything that she spends to her husband even though they have a substantial amount in the bank. In some families you will find that this becomes a power struggle and when you look at this weapon it is a very powerful one.

Husbands and wives often use money to gain the respect or the affection of their children. They surround their children with many luxuries, far more than any child needs. They try to buy the child's love through gifts and things. I've heard parents say, "We literally gave our children everything." Everything possibly, but love... then they wonder why their children don't like them better. It's a lot easier to shell out a \$5 bill or write a \$10 check now and then for our children than to spend a lot of time with them.

Another problem that should well be avoided is when people make so much money. Some people find this to be one of the biggest things in their lives, often even bigger than God. People are often happier when they don't have a lot of money because then they aren't tempted so much to use it as a means of power. I'm sure we all know families that struggled along happily for a number of years and then suddenly they inherited a great deal of money from a rich relative. That kind of wealth can be dynamite in a family.

What could have been a real blessing divides them and separates them. They really don't need each other anymore and a family is destroyed by its very wealth because they're not big enough to handle that kind of money. The larger home, the cottage at the lake, the clothes with exclusive labels doesn't bring emotional and spiritual happiness. It's not the wealth itself that ruins the family, it's the way they handle their wealth.

When God gives us wealth we should thank Him for His gifts and use them in His service. I like the statement of Paul in Philippians 4:12, "I've learned the secret of having plenty and hunger, of abundance and want. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." When we can be tested both by wealth and poverty, you may often find that it is easier to face poverty than wealth because then it helps us to remember, who is God, mammon or the God that we serve?

You can't cheat an honest man

by N.D.J. Hogeveen

"My Brethren, if any one among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins." James 5:19.

All advertising is false, right? Not likely. Very few firms today can afford the luxury of false advertising. Let me give you a few samples:
A. Top Drug Mart Ltd. of Toronto was fined \$3,000 for advertising "lowest possible prices every day on every item." Investigation showed prices were not lower than the company's competitors.
B. K-Tel International Ltd. of Toronto, was fined \$500 for advertising K-Tel's Cruise IV claiming it would increase mileage 10-30 per cent on most cars. Investigating showed it could not do this.
C. A Wisconsin circuit court awarded a \$875,000 judgment against a farm equipment manufacturer in another state to compensate for the loss of foot when a child tried to jump across an open auger on a piece of equipment. The state Supreme Court, on an appeal from the defense that he could not have foreseen that the children would use this farm machine to play with, upheld

the lower court since the advertising indicated "Even a child can do your feeding." D. Morgan's Variety Store Ltd., Wainwright, Alta. was fined \$500 advertising a \$4 trade-in on old jeans and cords when it was found the deal did not apply to boy's jeans.
E. The Bay, in Toronto, was fined \$1,500 for advertising "Don Parker Sweaters - famous Canadian-made quality" when in fact, they were made in Hong Kong.

Today, companies large or small are not only subject to special government watchdog agencies, but also to close scrutiny by John Q Public. A simple phone call to the Consumer Bureau or the Advertising Standards Council is often enough to get action.

Of course, the very fact that such agencies exist point out that all advertising is not good and honest advertising. It has been said that you can't cheat an honest man, but those people who expect something for nothing, the people who would not return that dollar the store clerk over-paid them, the people who would vote for a government because they were going to get "free" medicare, the people who work twice as hard when their boss is looking but do nothing when he is not there, those are the people most liable to be cheated by false advertising.

Just as we will always have dishonest buyers, we also will always have dishonest sellers! Prohibiting all advertising or using the standard cop-out "the government should do something" will not change that.

Advertising is necessary to lower the unit cost! This obviously benefits the consumer but ultimately it also increases sales and thus increasing profits for the companies. Since profits are the key words, a company simply cannot afford false advertising, not necessarily because of the high fines but mainly because of the adverse publicity!

Therefore we as Christians can do something to improve advertising. Not by jumping on the socialist slanted bandwagon and condemning all advertising as a capitalistic ploy but to react positively to honest factual advertising and negative towards questionable advertising practices.

How do we spot dishonest questionable advertising? Check the following:

Does the advertiser promise you something for nothing? Does the product solve all your problems. Does the advertisement sound too good to be true? Well, then it most likely is! Remember, advertising should be factual and offer you a benefit but nobody is in

business for charitable reasons. Having spotted a questionable ad, your first action should be to quit buying the product, then write a letter to the advertiser, tell the store owner, tell your friends but most important of all try to teach your children the distinction between good and bad advertising. Watch a commercial on T.V. with them, then take them to the store the next day and show them that, no, that space man does not fly through the air by itself, no that doll does not do all the actions as shown on T.V. Once your children get the idea, they won't put pressure on Mom and Dad to buy a certain product just because it is being shown on T.V. 25 times.

Of course, you also should react positively to good honest advertising. Patronize the stores endorsing such products, tell friends and neighbours of your satisfaction which such products, show your children. Again, if we help honest advertising pay for us and the seller it makes good business sense for the seller to check and double check that his advertising is honest and factual.

Advertising is part of life. There is no country and no person in this world who does not get involved in some form of advertising and don't let anybody tell you differently.

Today, a person extolling the virtues of his product or service verbally uses the most expensive form of advertising: Radio and T.V. is cheaper and magazine or newspaper advertising is cheaper yet.

These are the statistics. It costs as much as \$56 per call for a factory representative to call on one customer and as little as 25 cents per person to advertise their product by mail or as little as 2 cents per reader via newspaper advertising, not to mention the fact that newspaper or magazine advertising gets to people the manufacturer did not even know existed.

Let us therefore as Christians not tolerate this wishy washy idealism of some people who tell you "we should change this and we should change that or the government should do something about it." While all they want to do is change other people. Instead they should concentrate on educating themselves, their family and their children. Advertising is necessary and will always be with us. As Christians we should encourage honest good advertising and fight the sneaky and the bad. Let us help make advertising in Canada the best and make the best of it in Canada.

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Retarded teenager

a true story by Berta Hosmar

Andrew did not even belong in our nursery school for mentally and physically handicapped children. He was a big, husky boy of 14, and looked completely out of place here. Ann, the superintendent knew that Andrew's mother could barely cope, and she had decided to give her a break.

Andrew would come in every morning. He had been in an institution for several years and I had heard rumors that he had been very unhappy and upset there. Finally his mother could not bear to see his frustration any longer when she came to visit, and she had decided to try to care for him at home again. The sad part was that there was no other place to go to for Andrew. In the institution he could only receive custodial care, but a boy like Andrew should be kept busy all the time. His parents were trying to find a different place for him, but had not yet succeeded.

One morning Ann asked me to look after Andrew. His regular volunteer could not come in, and Andrew needed constant attention. I looked at Andrew, and again I experienced a mild feeling of apprehension. True, I was used to handicapped children, and I loved my charges, but "my" children were all between the lovable ages of two to five years. Andrew was rather good looking, but his eyes shifted constantly from one object to another, while he steadfastly refused direct eye contact with another person. I noticed that I could feel no love for this boy, that the most I could experience was a mild feeling of pity, but more for his parents than for Andrew.

"Severely retarded, with autistic tendencies", it read on his chart. Autism, that dreaded word in the world of mental retardation. The affliction fascinated me, probably because still so little was known about the cause, and the condition was so serious. Andrew showed in his behavior several points which are characteristic of autistic children.

First of all there was his almost total withdrawal from the world of people. He did not look at anybody, and did not seem to care whether his mother or anybody else handled him. Often it seemed that he was aloof and detached from his environment, and his behavior was frequently bizarre. He could spend hours indulging in waving his hands or peering intently through his fingers if we would let him.

Andrew did not speak, but would often jump off his chair and start screaming for no apparent reason. I had learned that autistic children suffer from illogical and acute

anxiety, and Andrew's behavior confirmed this. He knew his name, for he would come to the teacher after some gentle prodding, when he was called.

He had been tested several times, and we assumed that he was at the level of a 10-month old baby, as far as his awareness of his own personal identity was concerned.

Luckily Andrew was toilet trained, he could feed himself and he could also obey commands. Sometimes we would notice that he had missed little of what had been going on around him, while at other times he lived in a strange, often frightening world, known only to him. We knew that it was best for children like Andrew to be kept busy. We also knew that research was going on all the time, and we hoped that soon Andrew

could be sent to a farm, north of Toronto, Ont. where several autistic children were cared for, and were kept busy by looking after the animals and by doing the chores. For the time being we did the best we could for Andrew in our school, and Andrew was never without a volunteer.

Now it was my turn, and I felt a little tense. Did Andrew notice that I was uncomfortable? Everything went wrong that morning. He refused to stay with his finger painting. He had to help me dry some dishes, but he kept wandering away. I did not get any eye contact, and when I finally took him for a walk he did not want to hold my hand and he started to scream.

I looked at him again, critically, and I discovered that I felt uneasy. The people we met would probably assume that I was his mother. I

wondered if Andrew had any thoughts at all, or whether he was little more than an empty shell, a robot. Was his mind little more than a vacuum? I could not get Andrew interested in his environment, he simply walked silently beside me, head bent.

Could anybody really love him, I wondered. I knew Ann did, and several other volunteers showed affection for this boy, and of course his mother loved him, but with what kind of love? Could it be a mixture of pity, love, and guilt? A boy as severely retarded as Andrew gave so very little love in return.

After our walk I had to take Andrew to the bathroom. "Take the one down the hall", Ann instructed me hurriedly, and obediently Andrew followed me. I closed the door behind me, and told him to get ready, when suddenly he

grabbed me by my wrists. He screamed louder than ever, and I detected sheer terror in his eyes. I tried to soothe him, but to no avail. Andrew dug his fingernails into my arms, and I could not free myself, no matter how hard I tried. He pinned me against the wall, but before I had a chance to panic Ann suddenly appeared in the doorway, and instantly Andrew's screaming stopped.

"You poor guy", Ann said lovingly, and I felt completely bewildered. What had I done, to trigger off this attack?

"I should have told you", explained Ann, "but I had completely forgotten that this was your first time with Andrew. You closed the door of the bathroom, and we always leave it open. He likes it that way. You unknowingly changed his environment and that's enough for an autistic



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child to get another anxiety attack. These children strive to maintain sameness, as you know."

I felt a little depressed when I went home. The morning had been a total failure for Andrew and for me, and again I felt guilty that I could not love this boy, while I had never experienced any trouble feeling affection for the younger children, no matter how handicapped they were.

Sometimes I had secretly deplored certain people's attitude when they discovered that I worked with mentally handicapped children. A few people still did not understand in this 20th century that also the mentally handicapped can learn if we take time to teach them, and that the retarded among us are certainly not second class citizens.

I realized that my own attitude certainly was not any better at all, for this morning again I had detected a certain coldness and indifference in myself when it came to Andrew, and it bothered me.

I knew that Andrew, with his darkened soul, was an image-bearer of God, and that Jesus had never shied away from the mentally handicapped and the mentally ill, but poured his love on them. I knew that God loved this boy, and I asked for more compassion and love in dealing with this child. The next week Andrew was assigned to me again. This time I was determined to do a better job.

"Listen", I told myself, when I took him to a side room, "smarten up! If you are tense, Andrew will also be tense. The boy feels your mood. There's no reason at all to be nervous. He's just a boy who needs help and you are going to give him that help."

Everything went fine for a while. We started to finger paint, and I guided his hand over the paper. Then it started again. Only this time things were different. Andrew got up from his chair and stood behind me. Then he walked to the door and came back, and again he stopped when he was behind my chair. "Sit down, Andrew", I told him gently, while I turned around and looked at him. Then I noticed something strange.

Andrew kept staring at my blouse, a very colorful one, and did I detect a smile on his face? Again he walked away, and came back, and by now I was sure! Andrew was smiling, something he very seldom did. All of a sudden I felt a big hand patting my head ever so gently. I looked at him intently, and for a few seconds he looked at me. Eye contact with an autistic child! He looked happy and relaxed. Then I held my breath. Andrew's face came closer to mine until his nose touched my cheek. He held it there for a few seconds and then he

pulled his face back. I realized that he had been trying to kiss me, but that he did not quite know how to kiss.

At that moment something happened to me. All of a sudden I felt flooded with an intense feeling of protective love towards this big boy! Here was a human being, severely handicapped, but today I had discovered his soul! The realization moved me

deeply. Andrew had tried to show affection in the only way he knew. Most likely the colours of my blouse had stirred his emotions, and he had been trying to tell me, "Look, here I am, I like you, and I want to show you that I can love!"

Now I understood why his mother had wanted him home again when she had seen how unhappy he was in the institu-

tion. Of course she loved him! Of course we all loved him. My prayer had been answered.

I waited until Andrew sat down again. Then I hugged him, and for a moment he let me. And I knew that his life had a purpose, and I visualized a new heaven and a new earth, where children like Andrew would be healed of all their diseases.

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Opgaan naar 's Heren huis

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Psalm 122:1 (Liedboek voor de Kerken)

Er staat in de Bijbel veel geschreven over de Here Jezus. Heel duidelijk komt het uit dat Hij een opdracht heeft en heenleeft naar het kruis, waar Hij Zijn leven aflegt om zondaren te redden van de toorn Gods. Maar er staan ook telkens van die heel gewone dingen over de Here Jezus in de Bijbel. Bij voorbeeld dat hij naar de kerk ging. De kerk heette toen tempel, of meer plaatselijk: de synagoge.

De Heiland was opgevoed in Nazareth. Toen hij op een zekere tijd weer eens in Nazareth kwam, ging hij volgens zijn gewoonte naar de synagoge. Jozef en Maria hadden hem zo opgevoed dat er goede gewoonten in zijn leven gevormd werden. En een van die gewoonten was om naar de synagoge te gaan. Als de Joodse sabbat was aangebroken, dan ging elke jood naar de synagoge.

In de tijd van de Here Jezus vond men eigenlijk in elke plaats een synagoge. We weten in elk geval van zo'n tachtig plaatsen, dat er een synagoge was. En u kunt er van op aan, dan was daar ook meteen een joodse school, waar de kinderen werden onderwezen. Ook in het Oude Testament! Jozef en Maria hebben dus met hun zoon Jezus niet alleen gesproken over de sabbat, en over de synagoge, maar ze zijn op de sabbat met hun jongen er heen gegaan. Want de sabbat was voor hen de telkens terugkerende feestdag die aan God gewijd was en herinnerde aan de verlossing van Israël uit Egypte, doch ook heenwees naar de eeuwige sabbat, die met haar rust, eenmaal komen zou. Nu moet u niet denken dat het gezin van Jozef en Maria zo iets heel bijzonders was. Ik denk, dat het een gewoon, trouw, meelevend gezin was. Vader, moeder en de kinderen met z'n allen naar de synagoge, naar de kerk, nu dat is toch eigenlijk niets bijzonders. Dat was zo de gewoonte!

Als de Here Jezus, na een lange tijd van afwezigheid terugkeert naar Nazareth, en daar een weekend doorbrengt, gaat hij volgens zijn gewoonte op de sabbat naar de synagoge. Zo was hij opgevoed. Het is toch echt iets om u te vertellen dat in het grieks het woordje 'opgevoed' in een perfectum staat, dat is een werkwoordsvorm die uitdrukt dat de handeling is afgelopen maar dat de toestand voortduurt.

De opvoeding van de Here Jezus, door Jozef en Maria, en de rabbi van de synagoge was afgelopen, maar de resultaten duren voort. We hebben hier met de Here Jezus te doen na zijn opvoeding. En hij deed, wat hij altijd deed, wat hij van thuis had meegekregen: hij ging op de sabbat naar de synagoge. Op de sabbat kwamen de gelovige joden samen om te bidden en Gods Woord te lezen en te overdenken. En het was de gewoonte voor onze Heiland om daaraan steeds deel te nemen.

Gewoonte. Ik weet wel dat er mensen zijn die bang zijn voor gewoonten, vooral op godsdienstig gebied; b.v. de gewoonte om geregeld naar de kerk te gaan, geregeld uit de Bijbel te lezen, geregeld te bidden. Want, zo zeggen ze, het wordt zo gemakkelijk sleur. Diezelfde mensen hebben wel hun gewoonte om op tijd te ontbijten, te lunchen, en te dineren. Dat slaan ze nooit over. Stel u voor dat u vandaag tegen elkaar zegt: we zullen vandaag maar niet eten, anders wordt het zo'n sleur.

Als b.v. het kerkgaan een sleur voor ons wordt dat is dat niet omdat het voor ons eerst een gewoonte was, maar omdat we uit de gewoonte het hart hebben weggesneden. We gaan niet meer naar de kerk met ons hele hart, de liefde is er uit. En daarom mogen we onszelf wel eens onder handen nemen.

Als de Here Jezus ons een voorbeeld geeft en als hij gewoon was om de samenkomsten van Gods gemeente te bezoeken, en daar actief aan deel te nemen, dan moeten wij onszelf maar eens terdege afvragen of wij die gewoonte ook tot de onze hebben gemaakt, en als de onze in praktijk brengen. En als we werkelijk die gewoonte ook als de onze hebben aangenomen, dan moeten we maar in dezelfde gemoedsstemming zondag naar de kerk gaan, als die oude gelovige joden naar de tempel gingen met een psalm op de lippen: Ik zal met vreugd in 't huis des Heren gaan, om daar met lof Uw grote naam te danken. Jeruzalem, gij hoort die blijde klanken. Elk heff' met mij de lof des Heren aan!

Vanaf het Bijbelblad roepen ze ons toe: kom ga met ons en doe als wij! En de Heiland zegt: 'Ik ging ook uit gewoonte op de sabbat naar de synagoge.

J. VanHarmelen.

van dominees en gemeenten

De Synode van de Canadian Reformed Churches

door John de Haas

Dinsdagmorgen, 8 november, werd deze synode te Coaldale, Alberta geopend. Zoals te doen gebruikelijk was, werd de avond tevoren een bidstond in het kerkgebouw gehouden, waarin voorzitter Ds. J. Mulder van Toronto, die tevens een der afgevaardigden was. Hij was praeses van de vorige synode (1974) en zo werd de traditie uit Nederland voortgezet, welke voorschrijft: 'Indien mogelijk zal de praeses van een synode op de vooravond van de volgende synode een preek houden'.

Er is op een synode altijd heel wat werk aan de winkel. Eerst wordt het moderamen gekozen. Het werden: Praeses W.W.J. VanOene; Eerste Scriba J. Mulder; Tweede Scriba J. Geertsema; Assessor M. Van Beveren. Er waren geen buitenlandse afgevaardigden. Wel waren er schriftelijke zegenwensen binnengekomen van de Geref.Kerken Vrijgemaakt uit Nederland, van de Free Ref.Churches uit Australië, en kort daarna nog een telegram van de Vrije Geref. Kerken uit Zuid Afrika, met wie de Can.Ref.Churches correspondentie onderhouden.

Zoals gebruikelijk werden er vier commissies ingesteld, die elk een deel van het agendum kregen toegewezen, en deze gingen toen in commissie vergaderingen de hen toegewezen portie bestuderen en rapporten schrijven.

Een der eerste dingen, waar mee men klaar kwam was de zaak van het vrouwenstemrecht. Het verzoek van de Kerk van Edmonton om een commissie te benoemen, om dit netelige vraagstuk te gaan bestuderen, werd ingewilligd. Op de volgende synode (over drie jaar) moet deze rapport uitbrengen en dan zullen we wel verder zien. Zoals al in een vorig artikel is opgemerkt was dit reeds aanhangig op de synode van Arnhem in 1930. Er waren toen drie deputaten, waarvan twee in hun rapport het vrouwenstemrecht afwezen, terwijl de derde voorstander bleek te zijn. Als ik me niet vergis, is deze zelfde zaak op het ogenblik ook aanhangig bij de Geref.Kerken Vrijgemaakt in Nederland. Ook daar is er een meerderheids- en een minderheidsrapport, die op de eerstvolgende synode aan de orde zullen komen.

Bij de bestudering van deze materie door de te benoemen commissie in de komende jaren, zal deze dus een vruchtbaar gebruik kunnen maken van de resultaten, die wel zullen worden neergelegd in de Acta van de komende synode in Nederland. En tevens van wat er te lezen staat in de Acta van de Arnhemse synode van 1930. Waarom een

duplicaat produceren van deze aangelegenheid?

De vergaderingen van de synode zijn gezellig, ik kan niet anders zeggen. De afgevaardigden zitten in een groot vierkant aan hun tafels, benevens de pastor-loci Ds. J. Visscher, die als adviserend lid zitting heeft, en allen worden door de zusters der gemeente van alle nodige- en misschien ook wel onnodige, gezien de corpulentie van sommigen - aardse goederen voorzien, als daar zijn: koffie, gebak, thee, fruit, etc. De bezoekers delen er ook in. En die zijn er, vooral in de avondvergaderingen. De Can. Ref.Churches leggen steeds de nadruk op deelname van de leden aan het kerkwerk. Een synode is niet alleen een zaak van de afgevaardigden, maar evenzeer van alle leden; dat vindt zijn uitdrukking ook b.v. in het uitreiken van de Acta, welke zo spoedig mogelijk zullen worden gedrukt. Alle families in de verschillende kerken, ook alle alleenstaande personen, zullen een exemplaar door hun kerk uitgereikt krijgen, opdat ieder goed kan weten, wat 'hun synode' heeft besloten.

Ook de jonge leden der kerk worden in het werk betrokken en zo gebeurde het dat in een der middagzittingen de hoogste klassen van de Can.Ref. School in Coaldale onder leiding van een der onderwijzers binnenkwamen en de vergadering bijwoonden. Onmiddellijk werden de discussies door de synode onderbroken en sprak de praeses hun enige welkomswaard toe. Dit zullen deze jongelui ongetwijfeld nooit vergeten!

Nadat in de zaak van het Vrouwenstemrecht een beslissing was genomen, kwam het Theological College in Hamilton ter sprake. Het kerkverband der Can.Ref.Churches is niet groot en het getal der

studenten evenmin. Op het ogenblik zijn er vijf en men wil op verschillende wijzen pogen meer belangstelling, ook buiten eigen kring, te wekken voor de studie aan deze school.

Voor een buitenstaander doet het wat vreemd aan, dat een Generale Synode zich bezig houdt niet alleen met de salarissen van de professoren - welke werden verhoogd - maar evenzeer met die van de lectoren, de concierge en de 'administrative assistant'.

Soms wordt er echt onefficient gewerkt. De kerk van Edmonton had een voorstel ingediend om art.70 der Kerkenorde - betrekking hebbend op het huwelijk - te veranderen. Een der commissies krijgt het ter bestudering en maakt er een rapport over. Het komt in de openbare zitting en drie of vier uur wordt er over gedebatteerd. Doch er is ook een commissie welke moet rapporteren over herziening der Kerkenorde, en het rapport van deze commissie zal later aan de orde komen. Nadat er bijna vier uren zijn besteed aan de discussie over het voorstel-Edmonton komt iemand op het lumineuze idee deze zaak te laten behandelen door laatstgenoemde commissie, daar art.70 toch ook tot de kerkenorde behoort. En het wordt nog aangenomen ook!

Het laatste punt, waarover ik in het kort kan rapporteren, is over het Psalmboek, het 'Book of Praise'. Het ligt in de bedoeling dat de tekst van heel wat psalmen zal worden veranderd, terwijl uit de gezangen een achttal zal worden weggenomen. Achttien nieuwe zullen worden toegevoegd, alle berijmde gedeelten van de Heilige Schrift. Meer bijzonderheden kunnen echter niet worden gegeven, daar dit moet wachten tot het in de openbare zittingen is behandeld. Tot een volgende keer dus, waarde lezers!

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De "Jongeren" hebben sterke invloed in de Keizergrachtkerk

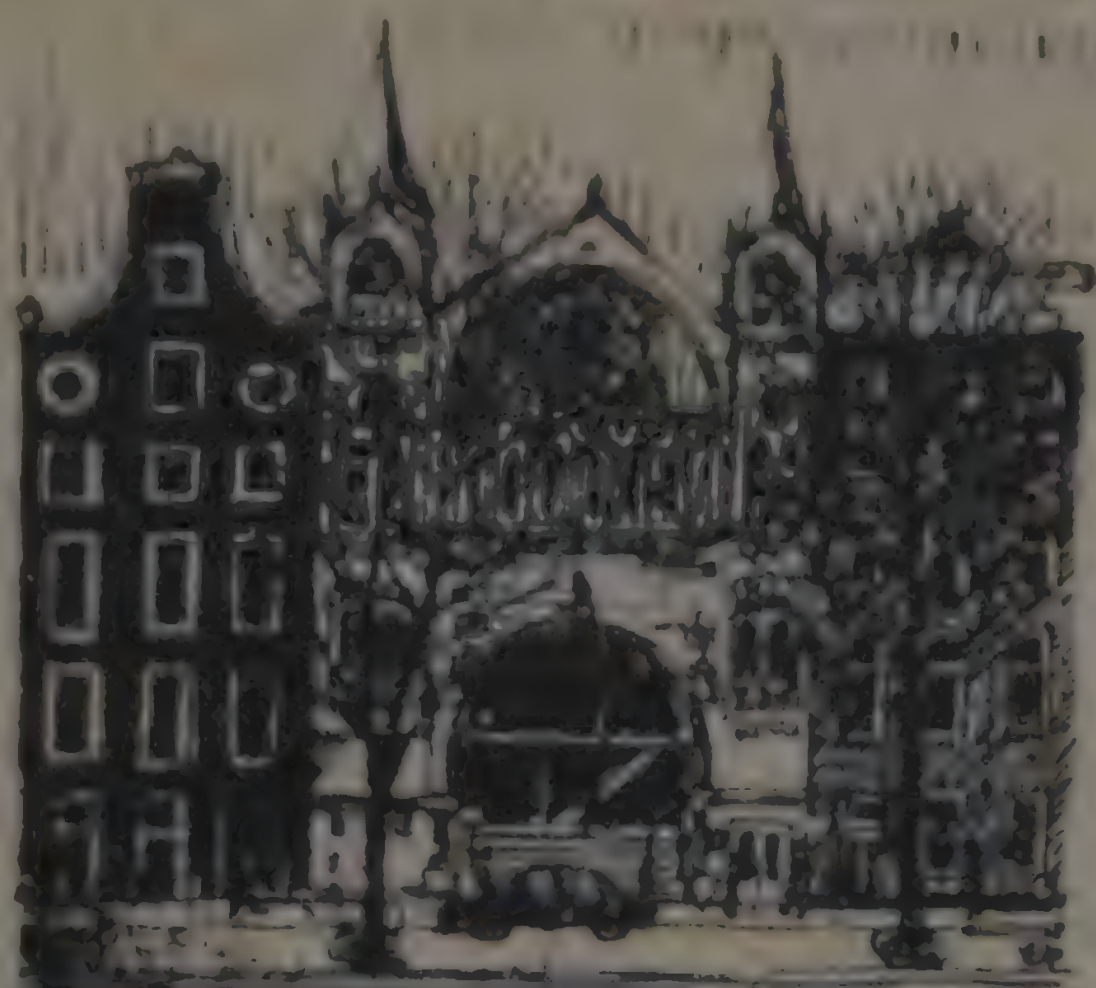
Verleden week plaatsten we een artikel over de "Jongeren-Synode". De invloed van de jongeren wordt ook gevonden in andere situaties, zoals in de Doleantiekerk, de Keizersgrachtkerk, in Amsterdam. Hierover een artikel uit "Kerk informatie" [Oct. '77]

Van de vier grote doleantiekerken, die aan het eind van de vorige eeuw in Amsterdam gebouwd werden ten gerieve van de volgelingen van Abraham Kuyper, zijn er twee afgebroken, is in één een supermarkt gevestigd en is er een over, waar zondags gekerkt wordt. De laatste is de Keizersgrachtkerk, die in bloemrijke tijden wel de "kathedraal der gereformeerden" is genoemd, en dat sloeg niet alleen op de hoofdstedelijke gereformeerden, maar op alle gereformeerden in ons vaderland, omdat in dit kerkgebouw in 1892 de vereniging van dolerenden en (een deel) der afgescheidenen plaats vond. Met andere woorden: de Keizersgrachtkerk te Amsterdam is de wieg van de tegenwoordige gereformeerde kerken.

Een paar jaar geleden liepen er Amsterdamse gereformeerden rond die bang waren dat ook hun befaamde Keizersgrachtkerk haar poorten vroeg of laat zou moeten sluiten. Het kerkbezoek slonk. Wijkdominee Pijlman had gevoelens van onbehagen om-

trent de traditionele kerkdienst met de dominee als soloïst.

Hij merkte dat een 'gewone' kerkdienst jonge mensen niets meer zei, ze kwamen steeds minder en dat terwijl uitgerekend de Keizersgrachtkerk de wijkkerk is voor naar verhouding veel jongeren, die in de binnenstad op kamers wonen of een verdieping huren. Hij kon hen niet achter de broek zittten tot een trouwere kerkgang. Hij begreep te goed dat ze uit de dienst van de gebruikelijke snit geen inspiratie konden putten.



De gevel van de keizersgrachtkerk, getekend

Hij is een jaar of vijf geleden met een aantal jonge gemeenteleden, voor het merendeel theologische studenten, over de zaak gaan praten en die zeiden om te beginnen dat ze heus niet van plan waren de kerk vaarwel te zeggen, maar dat ze bepaald niet zaten te hunkeren naar een min of meer fraaie preek, waarvan je maar moest af-

wachten, of je er wat mee kon doen.

Dominee Pijlman: "Ik was het met ze eens, toen zijn we plannen gaan maken. Dat er tenslotte wat van de grond kwam is vooral te danken aan de geweldige inzet van deze jonge mensen met hun vindingrijkheid en inhoudelijke bijdragen. Met het bekende KIP-rapport (Kerk in Perspectief) op tafel, stelden we vast dat de dominee een andere rol moest spelen, niet ergens ver weg in de hoogte, maar dichtbij, aan de basis. En verder hebben we het gehad over de inhoud van de preek. Daarin moest het gaan om een nieuw verstaan van de Bijbel, er moesten geen vanzelfsprekendheden opgelepeld worden en verder moest de zaak rechtstreeks betrekking hebben op de mensen in hun eigen situatie. Het ging en het gaat om een nieuwe kerkdienst waarin we samen bezig zijn met de concrete vragen die binnen onze gemeenschap - en die bestaat voor een groot deel uit loslopende jonge leden - leven."

Die vragen kunnen concreet aan de orde komen. Het moet en mag niet zijn het beamen van bekende waarheden, we willen inspiratie opdoen voor de dagen die volgen en vandaar dat we elke keer eindigen met de viering van het avondmaal. Met een werkgroep

wordt de kerkdienst voorbereid. Welk onderwerp kiezen we en waarom? De liederen worden uitgezocht met de muziekgroep, degenen, die actief deelnemen aan de liturgie (begroeting, lezen, het gebed, het uitdelen van de wijn) worden aangewezen. 't Is dus niet zo dat de dominee goelig de jongelui eens wat laat doen, hier ontstaat iets gemeenschappelijks aan en vanuit de basis."

Wat opvalt in de zondagmorgendienst in de Keizersgrachtkerk (de avondbeurten, beknopte leerdiensten met veelal studentendomeinees als voorganger, laten we rusten) is de ongedwongen en gezellige sfeer. Alles kan, maar niks hoeft. Je mag stencils over een actie uitdelen en mededelingen doen over een speciale demonstratie, maar wie nu meent dat het daar in Amsterdam wel een drammerig en modieus gedoe zal zijn, vergist zich: de onderwerpen die voor de preek worden aangedragen betreffen vaak zaken als: de omgang met God of het gebed. Maar dan moet wel gezegd worden, waar die omgang toe leidt in het leven van alledag en dan hoor je wel dat bidden ook is: omgaan met je naaste. Voor en na de dienst is er koffie, en er ligt een boek waar je een verzoek om voorbede in kunt schrijven.

De belangstelling voor de Keizersgracht - kerkdiensten nemen toe. "Het is misschien gek," zegt dominee Pijlman, "maar die toenemende belangstelling vormt in zekere zin een bedreiging voor wat we doen. Het is fijn een volle kerk, maar als een van de gaanderijen open moet, is het gezelschap eigenlijk te groot en kan de gemeenschap, zoals wij die bedoelen te oefenen, minder goed functioneren. We zijn samen ergens mee bezig en je moet oppassen dat je niet gaan fungeren als trekpleister voor de verveelde kerkganger. Anderzijds zijn we een open gemeente, iedereen is welkom en misschien komt het zo ver dat we elders in de stad iets dergelijks moeten opzetten. Intussen beweren we nooit: zoals wij het doen is het alleen maar goed, ik bezef dat we dit kunnen doen omdat er ook andere, 'gewone diensten' in de stad zijn. Er zijn tenslotte mensen die niet door onze opzet gepakt worden."

Tenslotte, de diensten in de Keizersgrachtkerk vormen geen particuliere liefhebberij van dominee Pijlman en wat medestanders, zij gaan uit van de kerkeraad die hier achter staat. Rondom deze diensten zijn allerlei werkgroepen ontstaan (zo kreeg de inspiratie gestalte, zou je kunnen zeggen) en daarin doen ook kerkeraadsleden volop mee.

Evangelisatie als bijbels leven

door Rev. Jacob Kuntz

Het volgende artikel is een deel van een driedelig artikel dat verscheen in "De Wachter" van 1 november.

Evangelisatie is meer dan "zielen voor Jezus winnen". Het Calvinisme heeft de taak van Christenen in de wereld altijd breder gezien dan dat. (Al moeten we wel eens afleren om laatsluitend te spreken over de "zieltjes-winnerij" van anderen, alsof het onbelangrijk is dat een verloren mens God weer vindt).

Het is altijd een reformatoisch ideaal geweest om met het Evangelie het leven te doordringen en de vernieuwende kracht ervan ook te laten zien voor de volheid van het mensbestaan op aarde. We kunnen het leven nu eenmaal niet in kleine stukjes verdelen en dan doen alsof Christus met bepaalde stukjes wel en met andere niet te maken zou hebben.

Wat betekent het evangelie voor het huwelijk, voor het gezin, de arbeid, de sociale verhoudingen, de politiek, de economie, de wetenschap? Welke betekenis heeft het voor onze ontspanning, onze vriendschap, onze maaltijden, onze geldbesteding, ons omgaan met energiebronnen?

Wanneer al deze dingen zo opgenoemd worden (en de opsomming is lang niet volledig) dan beseffen we wel

dat dit een ongelooflijk breed terrein is - zo breed als het leven zelf. Wanneer wij werkelijk "het volle leven" willen betrekken bij onze evangelie verkondiging, dan komt er aan onze taak nimmer een eind. En zo is het immers ook! Zo lang we op deze aarde zijn komt er nooit een eind aan wat er voor de Here te doen is. Nooit zullen we op onze lauweren kunnen rusten. Er is altijd meer te doen, meer te geven; er zijn altijd nieuwe velden te openen, nieuwe kansen te grijpen, nieuwe mogelijkheden onder ogen te zien. Mensen zeggen wel eens: "Houdt het nu nooit eens op?" Nee, het houdt nooit op. Altijd weer zal er een beroep gedaan worden op onze interesse, onze liefde, onze inspanning, ons geld, onze tijd.

Voor evangelisatie in die volle zin hebben we mensen nodig die ons daarbij kunnen instrueren, stimuleren en voorlichten. Toen indertijd Abraham Kuyper kwam met de boodschap dat er geen enkel levensterrein is waar op Christus Zijn hand niet legt, liet hij het niet bij die markante uitspraak. Er kwam een Vrije Universiteit, er kwam een Christelijk Dagblad, er werd een Sociaal Christelijk Congres opgezet en de mensen werden gestimuleerd in politieke actie.

Het werd alles ook als evangeliesatie gezien, als een doordringen van het leven met het evangelie.

Christenen hebben meer te doen dan alleen maar individuele personen

oproepen tot geloof in Christus. Wanneer we onze christelijke scholen bouwen en met grote financiële inspanning onderhouden, dan kan het de bedoeling niet zijn om onze kinderen uit de boze wereld weg te halen en in een "Christian greenhouse" op te voeden, maar dan gaat het erom om ze toe te rusten tot een waarlijk christelijk leven, als goede getuigen van Christus, als lichtdragers die ook in de stijl waarin ze leven, opbouwend de rijkdom van Christus laten zien.

Dat behoort tot het missionair karakter van de christelijke school. Ik weet niet of we hiervan altijd voldoende doordrongen zijn, en of onze scholen genoeg aandacht aan dat missionaire aspect besteden.

Aan een goede christelijke school wordt een stuk evangelisatiewerk gedaan. Daar leren kinderen te zien hoe Christus het leven vrijmaakt en op een nieuw plan zet om daarmee anderen tot zegen te zijn.

Het is ongetwijfeld een groot iets wanneer in een school studenten met Christus worden geconfronteerd en wanneer ze Hem vinden. Maar we willen toch de taak van de christelijke school graag nog wat anders en breder zien dan dat.

Evangelisatiewerk in bredere zin is ook het werk van de christelijke vakbeweging. We hebben onlangs in Canada weer kunnen zien hoe een klein stel vakbonden hele sectoren van het Canadese leven kunnen lamleggen,

Op die wijze willen ze de regering dwingen hun vaak niet eens gerechtvaardigde looneisen in te willigen. En dan gaat het weer hard tegen hard.. Hier komt de evangelische taak van de christelijke vakbeweging in zicht. Zolang zij zich in dienst stelt van een evangelische, bijbelse benadering van onze arbeidsproblemen en aantoon hoe genezend het evangelie inwerkt op de arbeidsverhoudingen, zolang is ook de christelijke vakbeweging een stuk evangelisatie. Vele andere dingen kunnen genoemd worden.

Wat zou er b.v. veel te doen zijn op het gebied van de communicatie middelen. Als we een christelijk dagblad konden opzetten, of een christelijk radiostation of een christelijke televisie organisatie. Niet om allemaal geestelijke overdenkingen te drukken en kerkdiensten uit te zenden, maar om op een verantwoorde wijze het licht van Gods Woord te laten schijnen op het nieuws van de dag, politiek, sociaal, cultureel. Het lijkt allemaal te mooi om waar te zijn en waar te worden. Ervaringen uit het verleden, met name ook in Canada, hebben ons wel geleerd om ons idealisme wat te temperen.

Zolang we dan maar niet vergeten dat het evangelie machtige dimensies heeft en dat wij geroepen worden te werken zolang het dag is, voordat de nacht komt waarin niemand werken kan.

DE KEUS VAN 'T SMALLE PAD ⁵⁶

een vervolgverhaal

door Gé Verhoog

"Waarom zullen we Henk niet helpen als we kunnen?" vraagt moeder bedachtzaam; ze ziet de klimroos tegen het huis reeds, de zon op de rozentrossen, de Ringvaart waarin alles zich weer spiegelt - een leuk huis...

"Toen Paulus hoorde: Kom over en help ons, ging hij subiet en meteen," komt Peter.

"Dat was heel iets anders," zegt vader, "jullie komen altijd te pas en te onpas met teksten aandragen als het in je kraam hoort. Daar is de Bijbel niet voor."

"U moest het prijzenswaardig vinden, dat we Bijbelvast zijn," moppert Peter maar vader is het niet met hem eens. "Jullie staan op heilige grond als je de Bijbel in gedachten hebt."

Intussen heeft de brief van Henk en Jacoba ernstige verwarring en onrust in het gezin gebracht. Natuurlijk willen Peter en Klaartje deze dag nog verhuizen, maar de jongeren denken niet verder dan hun neus lang is.

"Wat denk jij ervan?" vraagt moeder. Verbeek kan geen antwoord vinden. "Daar moet ik nog een paar nachten over slapen."

"Henk zal nieuwsgierig zijn naar ons besluit," denkt moeder, wat vader verbaasd doet vragen: "Heb jij al een gedachte hierover? Ik geloof bijna, dat je al een besluit genomen hebt!"

Moeder knikt. "Laten we maar gaan," zegt ze rustig, "de kinderen hebben het nodig."

Daar gaat Verbeek ver boven zijn verstand. "We nemen geen ijshoofdige besluiten," stelt hij vast, "stel je voor, dat we iets doen waar we later spijt van krijgen - dit moet biddend besloten worden."

"Maar Henk heeft hulp nodig," weerstreft moeder, "wie weet, heeft Henk al lang naar een oplossing gezocht en daarom gebeden, tot hij dit idee kreeg; dit kan voor hem een gebedsverhoring zijn."

Vader knikt meewarig. "Zoals jullie het kunnen versieren," zegt hij met een vergoelijkende lach, "denk aan ons menselijk hart! Wat we graag willen stellen we in een gunstig en als het kan in een vroom daglicht." Hij vouwt de krant open. "Praten we er niet meer over deze avond."

Klaartje hoort Kobus aankomen, haastig staat ze op. "Mag Kobus het weten?" vraagt ze voor de deur geopend wordt.

"Nee," bepaald vader, "hij hoort nog niet tot ons gezin en heeft er niets mee te maken."

Peter duikt weer in zijn boek, maar kan niet lezen. Naar de Meer - het is niet in te denken hoe geweldig dit moet zijn. De firma Maaswal heeft een prettig werk voor hem, maar het is op 't dorp en daar wil Peter niet blijven: de Meer, dat is een toekomst.

In de muziekwinkel beginnen, zomaar Henk en Jacoba helpen. Henk, die het te druk heeft, dus alleen de boekwinkel goed kan beheren, zal de muziek aan Peter kunnen overlaten. De gedachten stormen door Peter's hoofd: hij zal zich ook op de muziekgeschiedenis gaan toelagen, dan kan hij de klanten van dienst zijn - dit moet lukken. Er is een lach in hem: geen rietdekker, geen klompenmaker, geen dagloner bij de boer, maar wel in de handel met muziekverkoop...Wie weet wat daar uit kan voortkomen -

Ijver hebben ze wel, de kinderen, denkt Verbeek, die rustig de krant leest, maar tussen de regels weer ziet zweven: Henk, de Ringvaart... Hij dwingt zich tot kalmte, maar die is volkomen schijn. Toch moet hij als man en vader, die de verantwoordelijke beslissingen neemt, rustig zijn, omdat het vrouwvolk anders meteen de kluts kwijt is en overstag gaat. Het nachtje slapen wordt echter een slapeloze nacht voor hem. Hij begrijpt niet, waarom deze onrust in zijn leven moet komen: hij was tevreden met wat de Here hem gaf: werk in de zomer en werk in de winter; Zondags een goede kerkdienst met in de middag een dienst over de catechismus; zal hij dit alles verlaten? Dit dorp, waar hij elke steen kent, waar ze zo geworteld zijn, loslaten? Nee, dat is niet mogelijk. Dit is een aanval van de satan, die hem verzoekt met lokkingen van een gemakkelijker leven, een mooi huis met rozen op de muren - ach, wat! Dat hij het nu pas inziet - dat is alles werk van de satan die het niet hebben kan dat Verbeek tevreden voortleeft. Hij zal Henk schrijven dat het niet doorgaat. Hij kan het niet met zijn geweten overeen brengen. Het zal Henk teleurstellen. Henk is niet iemand die over een nacht ijs gaat, en wie weet, heeft de jongen al maanden lang geworsteld met deze vraag. Hij zal liever familie in de zaak hebben dan vreemde snoeshanen, dat is waar. Welk werk dacht hij zijn vader te geven? Wat? Werk? Geen rietdekker meer? Het slaat door Verbeek heen, dat hij hieraan niet heeft gedacht: het kan niet doorgaan, hij moet genoeg kunnen verdienen om zijn gezin te onderhouden. Waar afaat en niet bijkomt, dat wordt minder... Henk zal hem misschien werk laten doen in het magazijn - ja, daar heeft hij het vaak over gehad, maar hij kan zijn vader geen loon geven zoals hij nu verdient.

"Slaap je al?" vraagt Verbeek zijn vrouw, die onmiddellijk antwoord: "Hoe zou ik kunnen?"

"Weet je waarom we niet gaan? Ik kan mijn werk niet loslaten, want ik moet geld verdienen. Ik kan niet als een rentenier zomaar naar de Meer gaan en wachten tot de raven mij brood brengen; we mogen God niet verzoeken. Bovendien voel ik er niets voor, als een afgeleefd mannetje te gaan leven, ik ben nog fier en sterk."

Hij zegt dat laatste tegen zichzelf, omdat hij niet wil denken aan het feit, dat hij soms draaierig wordt op de daken en hij zich aan de mast moet vast houden... Dat betekent niets, want als hij even wacht en dan een slok koffie neemt, is alles weer over en werkt hij gerust door.

"Henk zal daaraan wel gedacht hebben," oppert moeder, "schreef hij daar niet over?"

Verbeek denkt even na - wacht eens... "Het is ook zo'n lange brief en de inhoud opzienbarend..." Hij richt zich op, stapt op de koude grond, draait het licht aan om de brief te zoeken. Dan leest hij -

"Je hebt gelijk, vrouw" roept hij naar de bedstee, "Henk schrijft helemaal onderaan zijn brief, dat ik niet bang behoef te zijn over gebrek aan werk, want er staan nog tallozen molens aan de Ringvaart, werk te over -"

"Dan is alles toch in order?" vraagt moeder blij.

"Ja, maar," bedenkt Verbeek, "er zijn daar natuurlijk ook rietdekkers, ik

mag die mensen het brood niet uit de mond stoten."

Hij legt de brief weg. "Vrouw, het gaat niet door. Ik heb het van alle kanten bekeken en weet, dat het een list van de satan is, die ons tot de zonde wil laten komen: dat is verschrikkelijke hoogmoed. We gaan niet."

Vastbesloten stapt hij de bedstee weer in, trekt de dekens over zich heen in de wetenschap, dat het goede besluit is genomen. Ze gaan niet - ze mogen niet. De Here wil het niet. De satan zal geen plezier hebben.

31

Na een week komt Henk onverwachts op een avond binnenvallen.

"Ik dacht dat jij het zo druk had?" vraagt Verbeek verbaasd over de gebogen bril heen kijkend. "Je komt bij nacht en ontij, m'n jongen."

"Dag, vader," begroet Henk, zijn vader de hand gevend. Dan begroet hij zijn moeder met een kus, zwaait naar Klaartje in de keuken en Peter die in de vensterbank zit te lezen; "het is zeven uur in de avond en dus geen nacht en het is schitterend weer, dus geen ontij!"

"Hoe is het met de muziek?" vraagt Peter.

"Prima! Gisteren weer een groot vijf-en-een-half spels orgel verkocht; een echt Amerikaans harmonium - wat een klank, wat een klank. Ik vind de Amerikaanse orgels het mooiste..."

Peter knikt, maar snapt er niet alles van; hij weet, dat hij nog veel moet leren, maar hij zal het leren.

"Hoe is het met de stamhouder?" vraagt moeder vrolijk, "en kan Jacoba alles wat bijhouden?"

Zie je wel, denkt vader, weer zo'n typische vrouwelijke listige vraag: de jongen schrijft een week geleden dat ze het druk hebben en nu vragen of ze het wel kunnen bijhouden. Daar steekt natuurlijk weer iets achter.

"Ik kom eens met u praten," bericht Henk, zich gemakkelijk in zijn stoel schikkend. "Ik ga niet eerder weg, voor u gezegd hebt naar de Meer te verhuizen."

"Zo," zegt vader, wat ironisch, "hoeveel dagen denk je hier te blijven?"

"Ik moet morgenvroeg weer terug."

Verbeek voelt dat de beslissing nu genomen moet worden, maar het valt hem zwaar te beslissen.

"Henk, ik dacht dat het een aanval van de satan was; een hunkeren naar meer dan de Here geeft - ik heb met hard werken nu mijn dagelijks brood en als ik naar de Ringvaart ga, kan het de hoogmoed zijn die mij drijft..."

"Vader," zegt Henk, "ik begrijp uw bezwaren. Ik ben overtuigd dat u het uzelf moeilijk maakt; zie het eens als een uitkomst, als een weg des Heren: u kunt niet ontkennen dat u ouder wordt en welk mens kan zijn leven lang elke dag zo lang en zulk inspannend werk doen? Dat houdt niemand vol. Ik wil graag eigen mensen in mijn zaak en - het is plezierig bij elkaar te zijn. Ik heb een rietdekker gevonden die teveel werk heeft, hij wil een aantal molens aan u overdoen, graag zelfs, en voorts heb ik in het magazijn werk voor u, dat u beslist met plezier zult doen. Voor Peter zit er een heel goede toekomst in, u weet wat hij wil, de mogelijkheid is er en u mag hem niet tegenstaan."

Er is veel gepraat die avond - Verbeek vindt de stap gewaagd en overweegt nauwkeurig of het wel de weg des Heren is, maar na de uitleg van Henk, die ook een diepgraver is en in alles de Here

vraagt - als Henk het zo voorstelt, kan Verbeek geen vrijmoedigheid meer vinden het voorstel af te wijzen en valt het grote besluit: men gaat verhuizen naar de Meer.

Het is inderdaad een grote stap. Deze grond is hen lief ondanks alles, maar moeder ziet het nuchter: "Het kan in de Meer aan de Ringvaart ook plezierig zijn; de sfeer in huis ligt immers aan onszelf?"

Lang is Verbeek die avond in gebed verzonken; hij legt zijn moeilijke vragen voor God neer en er zijn vele vragen in zijn hart. Het is een stuk leven, dat wordt overgeplant, het is een nieuw leven dat hij zal gaan beginnen. "Here, als Gij niet meegaat, zullen wij niet optrekken - ik vraag U - gaat U met ons mee, dit nieuwe tegemoet..."

Nu worden plannen gemaakt die hout snijden. Klaartje besluit niet mee te gaan, want Kobus ziet het niet zo zitten, dat ze voor korte tijd zal vertrekken: ze moeten toch op het dorp blijven wonen, aangezien hij zijn baan op het Gemeentehuis niet graag verwisseld. Waarom zullen ze niet trouwen?

In enkele maanden voltrekken zich gebeurtenissen, die nauwelijks te verwerken zijn voor Verbeek: zijn dochter Klaartje trouwt - het stemt hem tot grote voldoening, dat de hele familie van Kobus in de Gereformeerde Kerk aanwezig is - dit getuigt van goede wil en niet van haatdragendheid. Nooit zal hij de haat vergeten, die wel in het dorp heerste, die avond dat hij met modder en stenen is gegoooid...

Klaartje is gelukkig, ze lacht en kwinkelt de hele dag en dit zegt genoeg. Het kan Verbeek wel eens benauwen, dat Klaartje het leven als een pretje ziet, er zit geen diepte bij het meisje. Misschien komt dit nog. Nooit kan hij een antwoord vinden op de vraag, waarom zijn kinderen niet de weg gaan die hij is gegaan - alleen Hendrik kan nog wel eens getuigen van innerlijke strijd en aanvechtingen van de boze - maar de tegenwoordige jeugd lacht teveel. Waar moet dit heen? Is dit Gods wil? Is het waar, dat de Bijbel blijmoedigheid predikt? Dat het leven niet zo somber geleefd behoeft te worden? God beware hem voor een te grote lichtzinigheid...

De verhuizing komt in zicht. Schipper van Rooy is bereid gevonden het huisraad van de familie Verbeek naar de Meer te brengen - het is van weinig waarde, maar dat geeft niets. De Verbeeks zijn er gelukkig mee en dat is alles, wat men behoeft.

De laatste avond is het een grote verwarring. Het huis is volkomen in disorde, de meubels staan in elkaar en de kasten zijn leeg: het beeld van de komende verhuizing.

"We moesten vanavond maar afscheid gaan nemen," zegt vrouw Verbeek, "laten we nog eens naar het kerkhof gaan."

Dit verwonderd Verbeek. Het kerkhof bezoekt hij nooit: waarom zou hij? Toch gaat hij met zijn vrouw mee; de gedachte dat hij met menselijke zwakheden rekening moet houden, geeft hem de moed er toe.

Het graf heeft geen steen - er was geen geld en Verbeek gruwte van een steen op het graf. De mens moet het niet op het kerkhof zoeken, daar ligt alleen het ellendig stoffelijk overschot - de mens, die naar een graf gaat om iets te vinden, komt bedrogen thuis. Omhoogzien, over het graf heen, daar zijn de doden. Hij begrijpt niets van zijn vrouw, dat ze de laatste avond van hun zijn hier in dit dorp, naar het kerkhof wil gaan - wat moeten ze daar vinden?

Er is geen steen; een pijn steekt door vrouw Verbeek heen; de laatste rustplaats is zelfs vergeten, en straks niet meer te vinden...

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Births

DEBOER: Grateful to God we joyfully announce the birth of our daughter SHARON ELIZABETH on November 13, 1977. A wee sister for Raymond, Catherine and Paul. Another grandchild for Mr. & Mrs. W. DeBoer of Wyoming, Ont. Thankful parents are Oscar and Alice DeBoer, 905 Mountainview Ave., Ottawa, Ont. K2B 5G3.

KWANTES: With thanks to God we joyfully announce the birth of our son MATTHEW JON on October 15, 1977. John and Lammie Kwantes, Peter Jan & Mary Ann, 75 Morgan Ave., Streetsville, Ont.

LUNSHOF: The Lord has richly blessed our family with the birth of a healthy boy, JOSHUA DAVID, born on Nov. 11, 1977. Thankful parents and sister are, John and Yvonne and Yolanda Lunshof. 5th grandchild for Mr. & Mrs. J.A. DeVost of Mt. Brydges, Ont. and 18th grandchild for Mr. & Mrs. S. Lunshof of Chatham, Ont. R.R. #1 Wyoming, Ont. N0N 1T0.

SJAARDA: With great joy and thanks to our heavenly father, we wish to announce the birth of our new son and brother, TERENCE WILLIAM born on Friday, November 18, 1977. Proud family are: Pierre and Martha (nee Kuipery), Barbara, Anthony and Karen, Vaughan Road, R.R. #2 St. Ann's, Ont.

VANDERLEEST: With praise and thanksgiving to the Lord we are pleased to announce the birth of our son AARON JOSEPH born November 9, 1977. Proud parents are Herman and Kathleen (nee VanderKooij). 9th grandchild for Mr. & Mrs. Jouke VanderLeest, Burlington and 11th grandchild for Mr. & Mrs. Ary VanderKooij, Cayuga. 10771-141a street, Surrey, B.C. V3T 4R6.

VANDERVEEN: Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow! We are pleased to announce the birth of a healthy baby daughter, BONITA JACQUELINE, born on October 14, 1977. A cute little sister for Floyd and Gordon. Seventh grandchild for Mrs. F. VanderVeen, Surhuisterveen, Fr. Forty-second grandchild for Mr. & Mrs. B. Wolters, Duncan, B.C. Grateful parents are Al & Clara VanderVeen, 3929 Gibbins Rd., R.R. #2 Duncan, B.C., V9L 1N9.

VANEYK: The Lord has richly blessed our home with the birth of NATASHA ANNELLE on November 13, 1977. She is gladly welcomed into the family by her brothers Michael & Paul. Gary & Anne Van Eyk, 80 Cherrie Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2N 6L7.

Marriages

KERKHOF-MEDEIROS: Mr. and Mrs. J. Kerkhof are pleased to announce the marriage of their daughter ELIZABETH to MR. JOSE HENRIQUE MEDEIROS on Saturday, December 10, 1977 D.V. at 2 p.m. Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, South Street, Cambridge, (G), Ontario. Reception following at the Sheffield Community Centre till 5:30 p.m. Future address: 139 Christopher Drive, Apt. #302, Cambridge (G), Ont. N1R 6V9.

MEAD-VANDERWEL: Mr. & Mrs. V. Mead and Mr. & Mrs. H. John Vaandering are pleased to announce the marriage of their children WENDY and DOUWE. The wedding will take place on Saturday, December 31, 1977 at 4:30 p.m. in the St. John Anglican Church, of Gormley. Rev. Aaron Zull officiating. Future address: 619 Mullen Ave. E., Regina, Saskatchewan, S4N 1E1.

VANDERDUIM - KOOISTRA: Mr. & Mrs. B. VanderDuim of Edmonton, Alta. are pleased to announce the forthcoming marriage of their daughter JOANNA to CLARENCE KOOISTRA, son of Dr. and Mrs. Kooistra of Waterloo, Ont. The wedding will take place D.V. on December 29, 1977 at 7:00 p.m. in the Third Chr. Ref. Church of Edmonton, Alta. Dr. Kooistra and Rev. T. Oosterhuis officiating. Future address: Vancouver, B.C.

VANDERMEER-VANBERKEL: Mr. & Mrs. P. Vandermeer from Niagara on the Lake, Ont. and Mrs. & Mrs. J. VanBerkel from Beamsville, Ont. are pleased to announce the forthcoming marriage of their children ANJA and JOHN. The wedding ceremony will take place D.V. on Friday, December 9, 1977 at 7 p.m. in the Maranatha CRC in St. Catharines, Ont. Rev. J. Kuntz officiating. Future address: Creek Rd., R.R. #3 Niagara on the Lake, Ont. L0S 1J0.

Anniversaries

We thank God for the 40 years of marriage given to our parents

COR and BEP AAY

Please share our happiness on Saturday December 10, 1977. Open house from 2-5 o'clock in the Holiday Inn, Bloor St. E., Oshawa. Good wishes only.

Escondido, Cal.—Nettie and Fred Toronto—Ken and Gayle Hank and Chris Anne-Margaret and Zain Home address: 1086 Somerville St., Oshawa, Ontario L1G 4K5.

Grypskerk Edmonton 1937 1977 With joy and thankfulness to our heavenly Father we hope to celebrate, the Lord willing, on December 28, 1977 the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents.

JARICH and MEINTJE DEGRAAF nee Dykstra

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty — Psalm 91:1. Happy Anniversary, Mom and Dad. We wish you many more happy years together. Your thankful children and grandchildren.

Edmonton—Jean & Henk Siebenga Ina & Gary Van Doesburg Saskatoon—Cathy & Sid VanderWerff Edmonton—Ann & Clarence Wielenga Teresa & Tim Jonkman Lorraine & Ken Harmata Granum—Mona & Bill Clarkson Edmonton—Wayne DeGraaf Tom DeGraaf and 24 Grandchildren

Anniversaries

Ymuiden St. Catharines 1937 1977 With thankful hearts to our Heavenly Father for His care and goodness to us all, we hope to remember D.V. on December 9, 1977 the 40th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents.

MARTIN and NEL LANGBROEK nee Kat

We pray that the Lord will bless them in the years that lie ahead.

Beamsville—Alice & Jerry Gerritsen; Alan, April, Nancy, Melissa St. Catharines—Dick & Linda Langbroek George & Joanne Langbroek; Diana and Martin.

Grimsby—Ann & Clement Bezemer Katharine, William, Clement Jr. and (???)

Everyone is invited to celebrate this happy occasion with us. Open house will be in the Fellowship hall of Trinity C.R.C. on Scott St. on Saturday, December 17 from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Home address: 9 Kerwin Gate, St. Catharines. Best wishes only please.

Burlington

1952 1977 Psalm 37:5 — Commit Thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. On December 19, 1977, the Lord willing, we hope to celebrate with our dear parents

JOHN PRINZEN and SINY PRINZEN (nee Lammers)

the joyous occasion of their 25th wedding anniversary. It is our prayer that God will continue to bless them in the years to come. With love from their children Daphne and Wesley Prinzen. Open house will be held on Saturday, December 17, 1977, at 2015 Headon Road, Burlington, from 2-4 p.m. Best wishes only please!

1952 1977 Toronto Mississauga With much joy and thankfulness to our Father in Heaven, we hope on December 7, 1977 the Lord willing, to celebrate the 25th wedding anniversary of our parents:

JOHANNES STARING and EMMA STARING nee Mos

Happy anniversary Mom and Dad! We pray that the Lord will continue to bless you in the years to come. Love: John Clarina and John Smits (engaged) Home Address: 4161 Tomken Rd., Mississauga, Ont.

1937 December 2 1977 And let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it. (Ps. 90:17) Jehovah is faithful and has heard the prayer of our parents at their wedding. Forty years He has blessed and established the love and the work of

PIETER VEENSTRA and FLORENCE VEENSTRA nee VanderGraaf

A prayer for continued sustenance and happiness comes from their thankful children and 20 grandchildren on this happy occasion.

St. Catharines — Ted and Tina Veenstra Ouderkerk a/d Amstel—Rien & Dorothy Keyzer Toronto—John & Gerrie Veenstra Drayton—Jack & Ike Veenstra New Westminster—Fred Veenstra Ingersoll—Bill & Lucy Veenstra 53 Ghent St., St. Catharines, Ont.

Anniversaries

1952 1977 Watford Listowel December 12 The Lord willing we will celebrate the 25th wedding anniversary of our parents.

JOHN VANDEREYK and MARGARET VANDEREYK nee Feddema

We wish you much happiness in the years to come Mom and Dad. Godrich — Garry at home — George, Jack, Ken R.R. #2 Listowel, Ontario.

Nieuw Weerdinge Peterborough 1942 1977 The Lord willing, on December 15, 1977 we hope to celebrate the 35th wedding anniversary of our loving parents,

LOUW VANDERZWAAG and WILLEMINA VANDERZWAAG nee Groenwold

We thank and praise the Lord for His goodness and faithfulness and we pray He will continue to bless and guide them in their future years.

Bridgewater, N.S.—Siep & Cathy VanderZwaag; Bren, Craig, Renee Oshawa, Ont.—Senna & Hubert VandenHeuvel; Dennis, Terrence at home—Ed R.R.#3 Indian River, Ontario

Obituaries

On the 20th day of November 1977 the Lord took unto himself our dear Mother, Grandmother and Great Grandmother.

TRYNTJE TALSMAN nee Langhout

Lords Day 1, Heidelberg Catechism Pre-deceased by: Husband-Albert Talsma-Dec. 5, 1954; Son-in-law-Peter Attema-June 28, 1963; Grandson-Alfred Attema-Oct. 31, 1971. Survived by: Nunspeet, Netherlands: D. Van't Hul nee Talsma, H.J. Van't Hul; Frank, Tena, Marja, Alberta and Henk. Bentley, Alberta—John Talsma, Jennie Talsma nee Salomons Gerald, Albert, Douglas, Sidney, Margaret and Thelma Bentley, Alberta—Jitske Stolte nee Talsma John Stolte Altema: Frank, Albert, Theresa, Ena, Dorothy, and Peter. Leeuwarden, The Netherlands—Jannie Talsma 8 Great Grandchildren Oenkerk, The Netherlands

On November 11, 1977 the Lord took home to Himself our beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother

PIETERTJE KOOPMANS nee Bakker

at the age of 86. Widow of Tjitte Koopmans since November 14, 1947. Ps. 100:2 "Serve the Lord with gladness." Twello, The Netherlands—Ruurd and Afke Veldhuis Lynden, Washington—David and Agnes Willingdon Bellflower, California—John and Jenny Koopmans Vancouver, B.C.—Lambert Koopmans Telkwa, B.C.—George and Ann Koopmans Surrey, B.C.—Ben and Jenny VanderWoerd Telkwa, B.C.—Al and Ev Koopmans Langley, B.C.—Ike and Jean Koopmans 37 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren 3390 Cherry Street, Vancouver, B.C. V5R 4W5.

Obituaries

On Tuesday, November 22, 1977 the Lord took home, after an illness of about 5 weeks, our beloved wife and mother.

ADRIAANTJE (JANE) ANNA LANGENDOEN - nee Witte

at the age of 48. Psalm 121 St. Catharines—Bas Langendoen Smithville—John and Jocelyn At home—Andy, Ernie, Donald, Jennifer, Christine, Sharon Her complete readiness when the Lord came to meet her is our comfort and strength. Funeral service was held at the Hulse and English Funeral Chapel on Thursday, November 24 at 1 p.m. Rev. H.R. DeBolster officiated. Interment was made in Victoria Lawn Cemetery. 39 Harcove Street St. Catharines, Ontario

It pleased the Lord to take from us our principal and dear friend

DAVID SMITH

We mourn this loss, but rejoice in him being promoted to heavenly glory. Our sincere sympathy goes to his wife Pat and son Joel. May Dave's testimony and love for his Lord in his short, but rich life be their comfort now. One of Dave's favorite songs was: "Lord Jesus I long to be perfectly whole." He has now attained this wholeness. May his passing be a sign to us to prepare to meet our Lord. For the Collingwood & District Christian School Association. G. Huizinga, Chairman A. Neutel, Secretary

On November 22, 1977 the Lord took to His Heavenly Home, our dear friend

WILMA VANRYS

in her 35th year. May the Lord comfort and sustain Len and children with His tender love. "When we are called to part It gives us inward pain But we shall still be joined in heart And hope to meet again." The Tuesday morning bible study group.

On Friday, November 25, 1977, it pleased the Lord to suddenly take to Himself our dear son and brother

NEIL WYNANDS

at the age of 18 years. Mike & Ann Wynands; Rob, Henry, and Richard Psalm 42 575 Dewan St., Strathroy, Ontario. Suddenly God took away our beloved grandson, nephew and cousin

NEIL WYNANDS

Remembered by his grandparents: Mr. & Mrs. C. Wynands, Wormerveer, The Netherlands. And his uncles and aunts: St. Catharines, Ont.—Ed & Mary Wynands The Netherlands: Krommenie—Lu & Co Leguyt Hilversum—Dea & Nico Griffioen Kees & Ans Wynands Wormerveer—Henk & Alie Wynands and cousins.

The Lord has used a car accident to take Home His child, 18 years old

NEIL WYNANDS

who spread so much cheerfulness. His task on earth is now fulfilled, but he leaves a very empty place. Neil was preparing himself to publicly profess his faith in his Lord and Saviour. May this, and the surety of God's promises, comfort and strengthen our longtime friends Mike and Ann and their sons, Robert, Henry and Richard. Our prayers surround them in their grief.

Tom & Hennie Bergsma Ari & Jo Klein Bert & Thea Schilthuis Paul & Annie Struik John & Thea Ton

Obituaries

Whether we live or whether we die,
we are the Lord's. Rom. 14:8
At His time the Lord took unto His
own

BAUKE STELPSTRA

Dear husband and father of Gra
Stelpstra-Haanstra and children.
Tj. Hiddesstraat 17 Leeuwarden.

Son of:

Leeuwarden—Mr. & Mrs. D. Stelp-
stra

Brother of:

Amersfoort—Feikje & Roelof
Brantford—Doug(Douwe) & Kathy
Simcoe—(Wieger) and Joop
Simcoe—Bill (Wieger) and Joop
Strathroy—Steve(Syben) & Wilma
Leeuwarden—Theo & Coble
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nished apartment, near church and
ocean. For information call Niagara
Falls, Ont. (416) 354-5335.

Teachers Needed

JARVIS: The Jarvis District Chr.
School requires a teacher for grade
4, beginning January 1, 1978.
Please send applications to: Pete
Weening, principal, R.R. #1, Jarvis
Ont. N0A 1J0. Tel: (519)587-4444
(school) or (519)428-0887(house)

LADNER: Ladner Chr. School will
be in need of a new teacher for the
second half of 1977-78 school term.
Grade level: 4 & 5 (approximately
25 students). Minimum require-
ments B. of Ed. Preference given to
applicants with special area of
interest in French and/or P.E., but
all applications will be reviewed.
Salary: commensurate with NUCS
standards. Starting date: January,
1, 1978 (negotiable to Feb. 1) Please
send all applications and/or re-
quests for information to: Mr. Jake
Lieuwen, Principal, Ladner Chr.
School, 5280 - 48th Avenue, Delta,
B.C.

VANCOUVER: By the end of March
1978, Vancouver Christian School
will be in need of a teacher for its
combined grade 3/4 classroom.
Please send your application to
Frank DeVries, c/o the school, 5621
Killarney Street, Vancouver, B.C.
V5R 3W4.

Help Wanted

Career Opportunity

We have an opening in our office for
an independent young person to
take care of our office work. The
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duties and attending to walk-in
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printing firm in the Hamilton, Ont.
area. Send letters and resumes to
box #4235, Calvinist Contact, 99
Niagara Street, St. Catharines, Ont.
L2R 4L3.

Help wanted for a new 24 unit
apartment property. We are looking
for a caretaker to clean halls and
laundry rooms and also to assist one
older couple with light household
work. The applicant must live on
premises in a roomy 1 bedroom
apartment. For more information
please call 352-7399 collect or write to
H. DeJonge, P.O. Box 575,
Chatham, Ontario.

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PRIVATE SALE
COUNTRY PROPERTY

Are you looking for a place in the country? This may be what
you are looking for. Two storey executive type home with four
bedrooms and bath upstairs, living room, dining room, large
kitchen and two piece washroom downstairs plus closed in
breezeway. This property is situated on a one acre ravine lot.
There is also an extra garage for storage. This home can be
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9th St. Louth, R.R. #3
St. Catharines, Ont. L2R 6P9
Tel. (416) 685-1107

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in St. Catharines. New 3 or 4
bedroom home on Culdesac lot.
Walking distance to Calvin Chris-
tian grade school, Beacon Christian
High School, and the Christian
Reformed Church. For more in-
formation write: Mr. Henry Poort-
inga, 25 Old Oxford Rd., St. Cath-
arines, Ont. L2M 2J7 or phone
(416)934-1689.

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Niagara on the Lake

15000 ft. glass greenhouse. Ideal
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Contact: Ken Thompson (519)
524-7514.
Alexander & Chapman Realty Ltd.,
Realtor, Phone (519)524-6542.

Help Wanted

WANTED

Experienced meat cutter for shop in Niagara Peninsula.
Married preferred. Job available January 1, 1978. To apply,
write to box 4239, Calvinist Contact, 99 Niagara St.,
St. Catharines, Ont. L2R 4L3.

District 11 of the N.U.C.S. has an opening for a

half-time Curriculum
Co-ordinator

to serve the Christian Schools in the province of Alberta.
Duties will include curriculum planning, development,
consultation and government liaison.
For information and application contact.

— Secretary District 11, N.U.C.S.

Mr. Andrew De Jong
2839 - 49 St. S.W.
Calgary, Alberta T3E 3X9

With the Re-opening of our newly acquired residence
The Association for Substitute Family Living
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House co-ordinator[s]
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This is a challenging and rewarding position for a couple or
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Please send applications to Mr. John Prinzen, M.S.W. 2015
Headon Rd., R.R. #2, Burlington, Ont. L7R 3X5; or call for
further information at 335-2904 (evenings) or 528-1441, ext.
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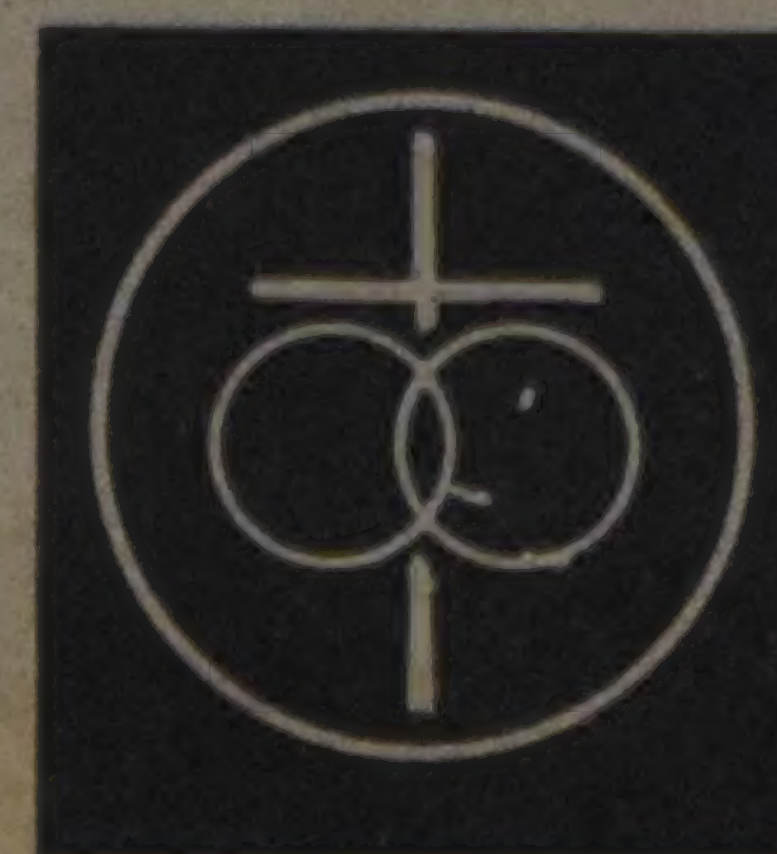


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working
young people
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greater Toronto
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for information about the Christian Reformed Church in the Toronto area please write:
COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCHES OF GREATER TORONTO,
BOX 216, STATION R,
TORONTO, ONT. M4G 3Z9

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For integrated Christian education, teachers and students alike need Christian textbooks. The Foundation is committed to underwrite Christian textbooks for the member N.U.C.S. Schools. \$30,000.00 is desperately needed for 1977. Please help us reach our objective for the benefit of thousands of students. Only your (tax deductible) gifts can make it happen. Send us your gift today!

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ANCASTER

Since the printer did not provide us with the required number of copies of the November 11 issue, we were not able to send all of you your copy. We were not aware of the shortage until the end of the mailing, so we could not obtain additional copies for you. Please accept our apologies.

The Brampton Christian
Choral Society
Praise the Lord

presents

“The Birth of Christ”
a Christmas Oratorio

by Rients Beintema

Directed by Mr. W. Hoekstra, accompanied by Mr. Fred Numan,
organ and Raymond Hoekstra, piano.

December 14 — in Whitby, Hebron Christian Reformed Church
at 8 p.m.

December 18 — in Brampton, Second Christian Reformed
Church, Steeles Ave. at 8 p.m.

NO ADMISSION

Stewardship, Energy
& Agriculture

The Annual Convention of the
Christian Farmers Federation
of Ontario

will be held

DECEMBER 9, 1977 FROM 9:30 A.M. — 6:00 P.M.

Speakers:

Honorable Eugene Whelan
Federal Minister of Agriculture
John Olthuis, Director of
research and policy development,
CJL Foundation

Location:

Peter Clark Hall
University Centre
University of Guelph

Pre-registration appreciated at: Box 70, Drayton, Ont. N0G
1P0 or call: 519-638-3063.

You are invited to attend RBC

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Two sessions of nine days each, August
9-18 and 21-30, on the beautiful RBC
Campus. Courses in Bible, missions, and
many subjects of special interest to all
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for academic credit, one or both ses-
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Details gladly sent on request



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25th Anniversary

The Congregation of the

Rehoboth Christian Reformed
Church of Toronto

extends a warm invitation to all former members and their
families to join us in the celebrations

Dinner and Social Evening
January 14, 1978

Special Anniversary Services
Sunday, January 15, 1978

Please contact Mr. W. Jansen, 11 Ringway Cr., Rexdale,
Ont. M9W 1X2, for accommodation, directions to the hall
and dinner reservations.

Please reply before December 15, 1977 so that we can plan
our dinner.



An Exhibition of Art

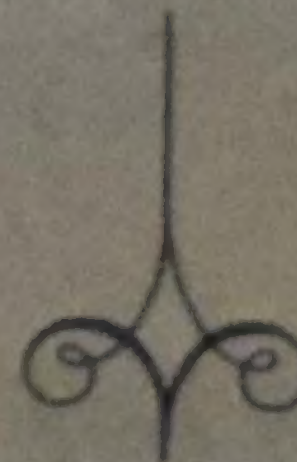
by

matth cupido

Theme:

A New Icon

Paint, oil, pen & ink, and gouache



TO OPEN ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1977 AT 8 P.M.
AT PATMOS GALLERY, 406 KING ST. E., TORONTO

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Dec. 10 Christmas Concert with 100 voice choir with Brass Quartet.
Leendert Kooij directing, organist Andre Knevel. 8:15 p.m.
in the St. Thomas Anglican Church, St. Catharines, Ont.
- Dec. 17 Strathroy Annual Christmas Concert with the St. Thomas
Male Choir, Crescendo; the St. Thomas Ladies Choir, Gloria
in Excelsis; and the St. Thomas School Choir in the First
Chr. Ref. Church, Strathroy at 8:00 p.m.
- Dec. 20 St. Thomas Annual Christmas Concert in the Trinity
Anglican Church, 55 Southwick St., at 8:00 p.m., featuring
same choirs as the Strathroy Concert (Dec. 17).

Christian Reformed television programs in Winnipeg and Ontario:
Winnipeg, Channel 9; The four-part CRC-TV series will be aired at
10:30 p.m. on Dec. 5, and Dec. 12.

Ontario, Global Network (Channels 22, 29, 6 and 2); The four-part
CRC-TV series will be aired at 7:00 p.m. on Dec. 13, 14, 20 and 21.

AACS Public Lecture

Mr. C.T. McIntire will speak on "God's work in a secular age" in the
following cities. Dec. 2, Edmonton; Dec. 8, Sarnia.

Schaeffer Film Series

The ten week film series How Should We Then Live? is being shown at
the Toronto (Rehoboth) CRC, 800 Burnhamthorpe Rd., Etobicoke, from
Oct. 3 to Dec. 12. The series is being shown on ten consecutive
Mondays and includes such topics as the Roman Age, the Middle Age,
the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Revolutionary Age, the
Scientific Age and the Age of the Non-reason.

Lecture series of The five points of Calvinism

Series will be held Thursday, Dec. 1, 8, 15 at the Can. Ref. Theological
College, 374 Queen St. S., Hamilton, featuring Dr. J. Faber, prof. of
dogmatology as lecturer on the topic Five Points of Calvinism. Sessions
will be held from 8 p.m. to 9:45 p.m. and admission is free.

Andre Knevel organ concerts

- Dec. 3 Centr. United Church, Woodstock, Ont. at 8:15 p.m.
- Dec. 10 St. Thomas Anglican Church, St. Catharines, Ont. with choir
and brass quartet under Leendert Kooij, 8:15 p.m.

Next issues of C.C.:

Dated	Mailed	Ad deadline
Dec. 9	Dec. 7	Dec. 5
Dec. 16	Dec. 14	Dec. 12
Dec. 23	Dec. 21	Dec. 19

Books

Test the spirits when you deal with "liberation" ideas

Christian Education for Liberation and Other Upsetting Ideas by J.C. Wynn, published by Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1977; 111 pages.

Reviewed by Theodore Plantinga of Paideia Press, St Catharines.

The author of this little book has a telling comment to make the public proclamations that issue from churches and ecumenical organizations in our time: he speaks of a "canny mixture of revolutionary rhetoric and evangelical message" (p. 43). Unfortunately, the same "canny mixture" is present in his own book. He writes: "Some theologians, in fact, go considerably farther than researching the question

of how God is speaking to our time through the history of suffering peoples. They advocate revolution.... To such theologians of revolution, the Christian pacifist's total renunciation of power is seen as irresponsible. Some have turned aside from Martin Luther King Jr.'s nonviolent philosophy to admire instead Mao's armed force... Some... have taken Thomas Aquinas' theory of a just war and applied it to a possible new theory of a 'just revolution'" (pp.44-5).

Wynn associates himself with these theologians of revolution and calls for "conscientization" (p.53) as an objective of Christian education — "Christian education for liberation!" This clumsy term, which the English language

could well do without, apparently it means that we must side with the poor and oppressed against you-know-who by joining the battle against racism, sexism, ageism, and so forth. Anita Bryant, beware!

Wynn's call for social justice is appealing; his uncritical embrace of left-wing movements is not. As I read the book, I couldn't help but ask: Whatever happened to "testing the spirits to see whether they are of God?" (1 John 4:1). The assumption that God Himself is at work in virtually every liberation front and minority rebellion is all too quickly made, even by people in our Reformed camp. I should like to see this assumption subjected to some critical

analysis.

John goes on to say that confessing the name of Christ comes first — not showing your hatred of capitalism and the establishment.

At this point you may be asking yourself: What does all of this have to do with Christian education? For one thing, Wynn is not talking about Christian schools. There is not a mention of Christian day schools in this book. He's talking about the church's educational ministry, which he equates with the church's central mission, its "very

apostolate" (p. 22). In short, the message of liberation, the message that radical change is in order, is Wynn's real point in the book. What it all boils down to is, that it is the church's task to promote "liberation" — by promoting the usual array of left-wing causes.

The book is made up of essays, and thus it touches on a fairly broad range of topics. It is well written and informative. Anyone interested in Christian education, whether in church or school, can benefit from it.

Comforting thoughts for the homemaker

Hold me up a little longer, Lord by Marjorie Holmes published by Doubleday; 120 pages; price \$5.95.

Reviewed by Sara Hoogsma of Vernon, B.C.

Hold me up a little longer, Lord is a collection of prayers in which Marjorie Holmes talks about every aspect of her life as a woman. About life

itself she writes: Help me to be fully awake and aware of the wonders of my life now." About love: "Lord, don't ever let me be too busy to love". About a son who won't study: "Help me not to consider what I want for him, but what you want for him." About gossip: "Gossip is contagious Lord, and I've discovered I'm not immune". About growing mentally: "As a wife, mother

or friend, help me to keep growing".

Marjorie talks to God about all the highs and lows in her life. We even find a needlework prayer in the book.

Every woman will recognize many of her own thoughts and prayers in Marjorie's conversations with God.

This booklet has some fine illustrations by Patricia Mighell.

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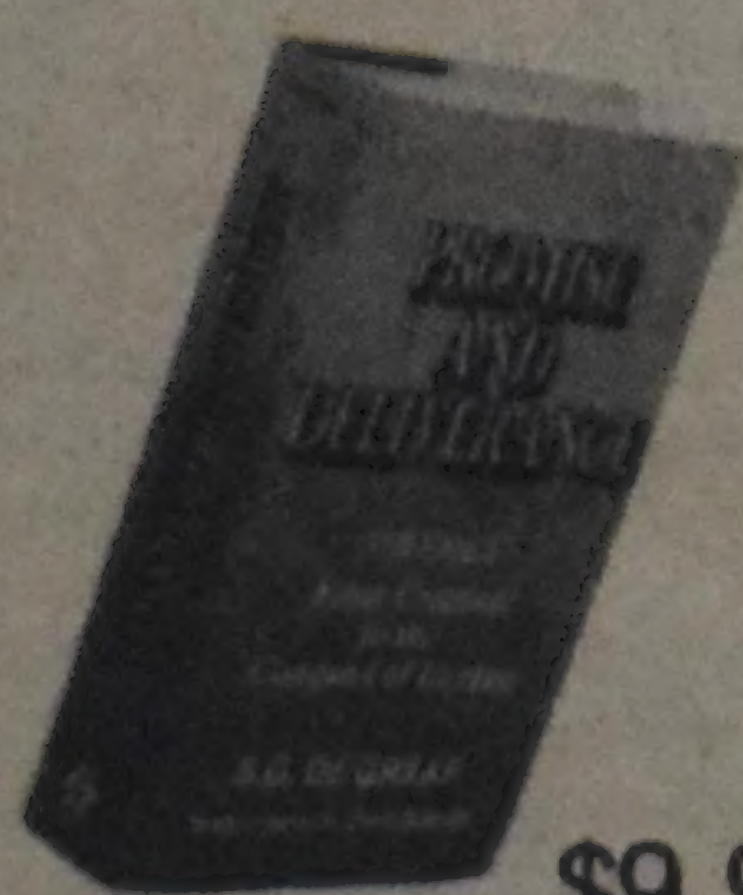
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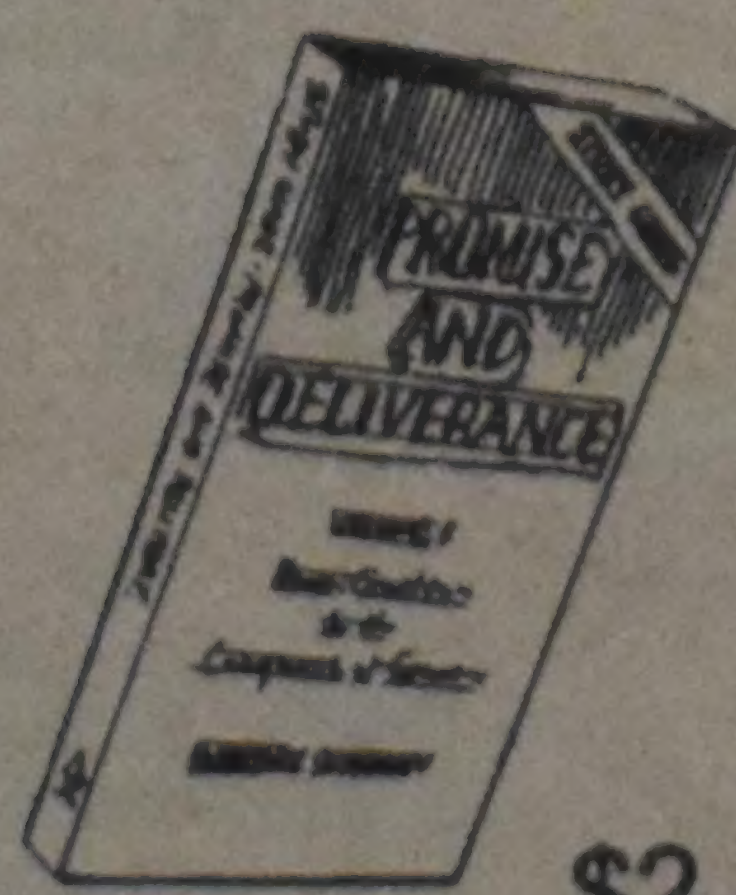
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Daylight—daily readings with the Bible
by: A. Kuyvenhoven



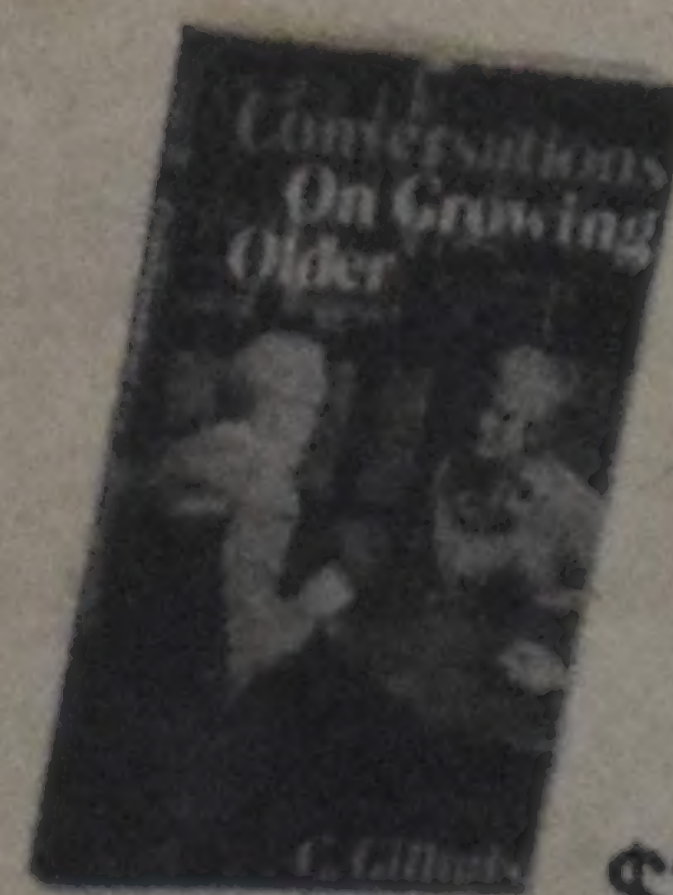
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